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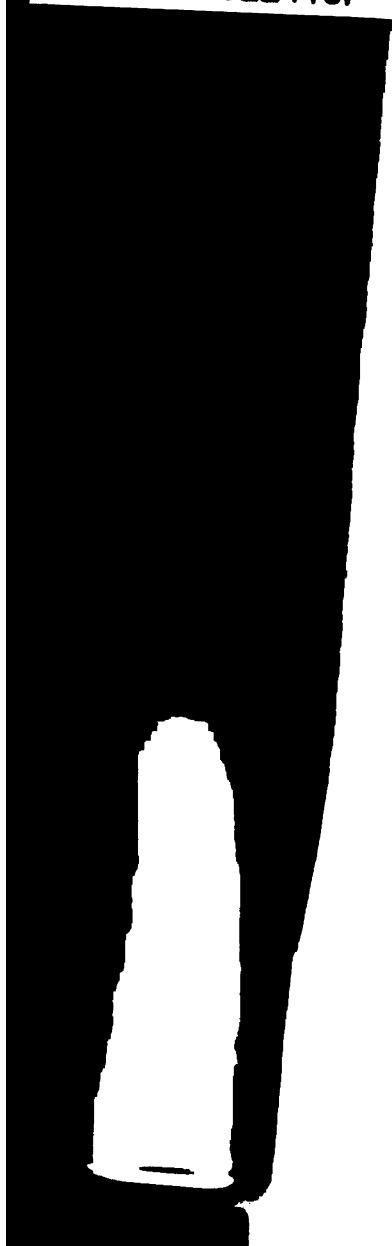
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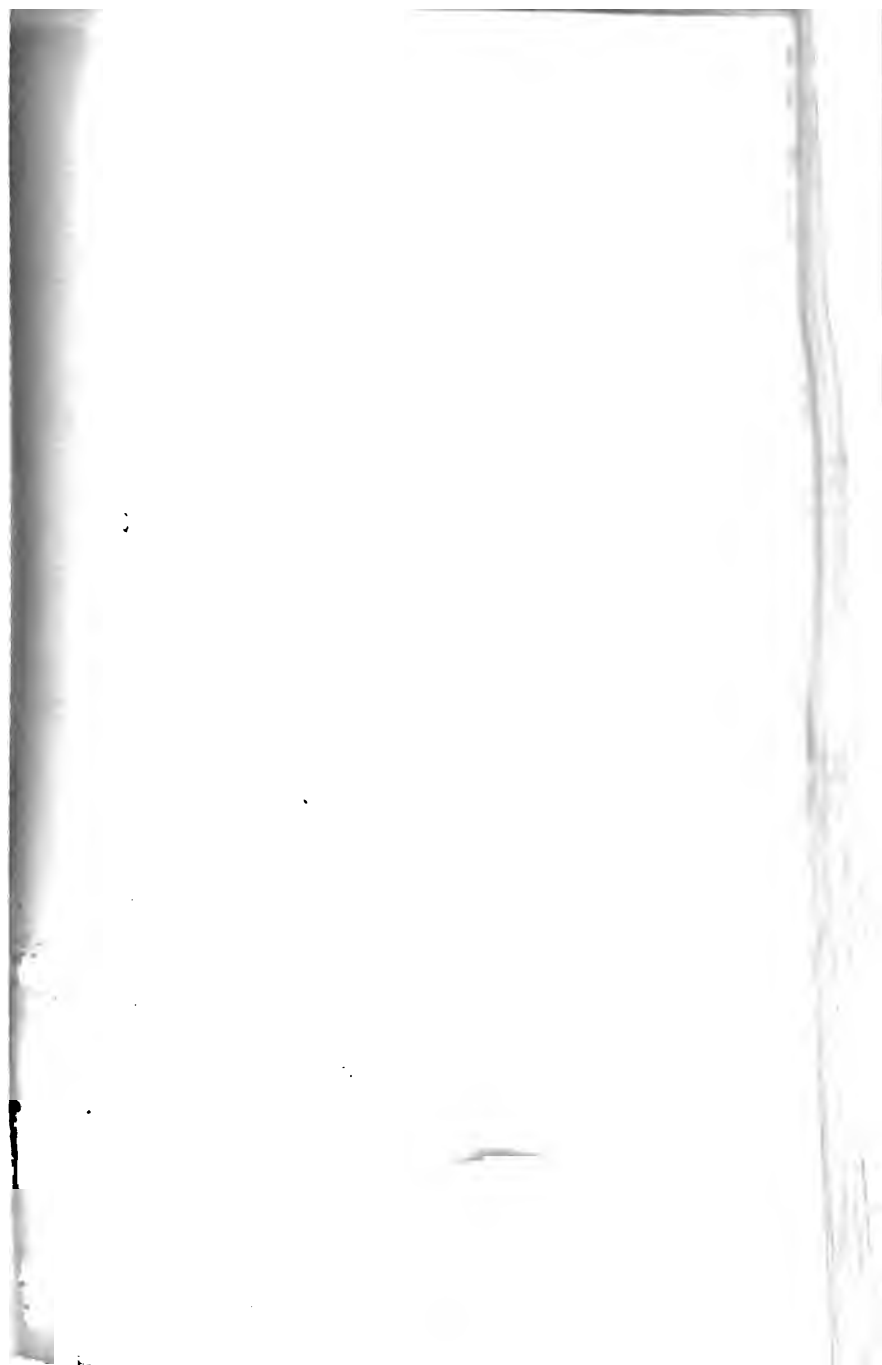
THE
HIDDEN
LIFE

A Memoir
of
MRS SHIRREFF



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W H McFarlane, auth' & engr

MANSE AT ST NINIANS.

THE HIDDEN LIFE

A Memoir

OF

MRS. SHIRREFF

WIFE OF

THE REV. WILLIAM SHIRREFF

FORMERLY MINISTER OF ST. NINIAN'S.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."—COL. III. 3.

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P R E F A C E.

THE publication of this volume, consisting, principally, of extracts from the papers of Mrs. Shirreff, is designed to serve the same object, which, when living, she pursued.

Many of her surviving friends are desirous that a character so exemplary should have its memorial and influence in other hearts besides their own. To them, her memory is precious, and these records of her inner life disclose the workings of the grace of God, whose blessed fruits they witnessed in her habitual spirit and demeanour.

The reader may recognize in these pages the practical influence of Christianity, in a life of considerable extent—a life passed in diversified scenes—a life of singular trials of that faith and patience through which we inherit the promises.

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It is hoped that such a memorial of practical piety may be useful, more especially to females in our Christian communities; nor can any regenerate child of God fail to be interested in the expression of those principles and emotions of the spiritual life, in which, as face answers to face, all are one in Christ Jesus.

MEMOIR.

MARY RUSSEL, daughter of the Rev. John Russel, was born in Kilmarnock on the eighth of March 1784. Her father was at that time minister of the High Church. In early life, Mr. Russel had been the tutor of Charles Grant, Esq., whose subsequent career in India was so eminently conducive to the encouragement of Christian missions in that country.

Mr. Russel was distinguished by great energy and decision of character. Holding the great truths of Christianity with a firm grasp, he believed and spoke with uncompromising boldness and zeal. It was his conviction that, in his day, a large number of the ministers of the Church of Scotland were indifferent or hostile to the grand peculiarities of the Gospel of Christ. Believing as he

did, that grace reigns in the salvation of mankind, that our acceptance and justification in the sight of God are inseparable from faith in the great Redeemer, that a renovation of the heart by the Holy Spirit is essential to the existence of Christian holiness, he lifted up a standard for the truth and zealously contended for the faith once delivered to the saints.

That distinguished but unhappy child of genius, the poet Burns, says of him :—

“ His piercing words like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow ;
What herd like Russel told his tale,
His voice was heard through muir and dale.”

Burns had no sympathy with Mr. Russel's teaching of Christianity, nor could he understand the tone and spirit of his life. It is probable he had little personal knowledge either of the one or the other ; but Dr. Chalmers, a more competent judge, describes him as an eminent pattern both of family religion and of ministerial faithfulness.

Mary Russel was the daughter of Catherine

Cunningham, the second wife of this good minister of Jesus Christ. This lady was herself eminently pious, and had been trained up under the care of a mother of whom it is recorded, that having a large family, and ever pressing claims on her time, she rose habitually at four o'clock in the morning that she might secure time for private devotion and other religious exercises.

When an infant, Mary Russel was so exceedingly frail, that for many months life seemed to tremble in the balance. "What do you think of my child," said Mr. Russel to Martha Wylie, an aged woman, and one of his parishioners. "Oh, sir," was her reply, "her sides are not fallen in, she will live to be an old woman."

Brought up in an atmosphere of piety, hearing and witnessing so much that brought religious things and the exercises of devotion so prominently before her, this young child, at a very early age, imbibed strong impressions of the importance of prayer. Having heard that one Elizabeth West sat up all night for devotional exercises, Mary, when four

years of age, would try to do the same, but nature rebelled ; for she knew not what she did. It is not in this way that God perfects his praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. That she had even then, a strong sense of the importance of religion, cannot be doubted ; but as Saul's armour was unfitted for the youthful David, and strong meat is not suitable for babes, so it is unreasonable to expect young children to quit themselves like men. They may be godly at a very early age, but their piety is most genuine when it is expressed in acts appropriate to that age. The religious life like that of the body, should not be forced or put forward in unseasonable expressions.

Habits of retirement for reading and prayer were formed by Mary Russel, and not unfrequently her mother had occasion to recall her to other duties from the solitude of her private room. She would sometimes mention a visit paid to a friend's house, in her own early childhood. While in that house, witnessing great

indifference to religious exercises on the Sabbath—being in sight of her father's window, and remembering how he would be engaged on that day,—she felt quite unhappy, in the conviction that the day was not spent as he had enjoined. Mr. Russel, though really kind, ruled his own house with a vigorous hand. His family met him before six o'clock in the morning. In early life, his daughter sometimes regarded this act of discipline as somewhat hard and trying; but the result was, in her case, a habit of early rising, which continued through life, and yielded inestimable advantages.

Retiring and diffident, Mary had very little of the impulsive manner which distinguishes some children. She was rather disposed to conceal her emotions. At a very early age she could evince a singular degree of self-control. It may be properly affirmed that this habit of hiding her emotions was, in some degree, injurious. It was certainly so in a case where a domestic in her father's household, by threats, blows, and other

injuries, so oppressed this child's spirits that she became seriously unwell, confined to her bed, and at one time was thought to be dying.

She concealed the real cause of her suffering, and it was not until the person had left the family circle that she uttered a word on the usage she had experienced. Among the most interesting and affecting records of human life would be that which disclosed the untold, unknown sorrows and griefs of young children. The kindest and best of our youthful race often suffer for months, and even years, secret griefs and wrongs, which put poison in their cup of joy, and sap the very springs of life.

Mary Russel was in her sixteenth year when the family removed from Kilmarnock to Stirling. In the latter named town, her father accepted a collegiate charge in the East church, in conjunction with the Rev. Dr. Somerville.

Soon after her removal to Stirling, her parents, wishing to secure, on her behalf, superior advantages for her education, sent her to Glasgow,

availing themselves of the kind invitation of Dr. Balfour that their daughter should make his house her home while pursuing her studies in that city. The subject of this memorial never forgot the Christian kindness of that excellent man. Here, she was not only introduced to improving society and to many friends whose affectionate attentions were most grateful and beneficial, but her mind gradually opened to new scenes and views of society, under the kind and wise guidance of the Christian family in which she was so happily placed. Here also, she imbibed many practical lessons as to social intercourse and the courtesies of human life, which were of inestimable value. She would often repeat to her young friends similarly favoured a remark addressed to her by Miss Balfour, "Remember, Mary, it is for your father's sake and not your own that people are so kind to you."

After her return from Glasgow she paid visits to several of her relations, and was often at Powres, under the hospitable roof of Major

Mayne. To the sister of this gentleman she was deeply attached, not only on account of her estimable character, but also as a most faithful friend, who took great care in promoting the improvement of her temper and manners.

Soon after her return to her father's house, her younger brother, Alexander, became seriously indisposed ; and change of air and scene having been deemed requisite, his sister became his attached nurse and companion. She was now called to pass through another course of discipline more trying and painful than that recently known, but still more beneficial to her spiritual welfare and her future usefulness. During her residence at Glasgow, she had been greatly impressed under the discourses of Dr. Balfour, had attended to all that usually constitutes an external profession of religion in the Established Church of Scotland, but as she afterwards knew and confessed, though a great, she was really a hypocritical, professor of religion. Her heart was a stranger to all true contrition for sin and

humiliation before God. She was neither reconciled to Him, nor sincerely consecrated to His service. She was a formalist, self-righteous, self-willed amidst clear evangelical light and evangelical teaching; and while using the words which express penitence for sin, faith in Christ, and all the exercises of a spiritual mind, she neither knew God nor obeyed the Gospel of Christ.

Though her brother's illness for some time assumed an alarming aspect, he was at length sufficiently restored to enter on active pursuits in London, where his prospects of future success were very encouraging. A relapse, however, soon ensued, and by very rapid decline, this brother was lost to the family circle, leaving satisfactory evidence to surviving relations that though absent from the body and from them, he was present with the Lord.

The removal, by death, of this beloved brother, with all its accompanying scenes, its instructive lessons and warnings, awakened, by God's grace, emotions of which she had hitherto been in a

great degree unconscious. She saw the world, and sin, and death in new lights. She believed the truth as to these things. She was convinced that the religion she had hitherto known was not the religion which would pass the test of a dying hour. Satisfied that God and the world cannot in fact divide the heart's devotion, she began to understand not only the need of renewing grace and salvation, but also what is the true nature of that salvation. Its greatness, its necessity, its importance were felt, and she became all alive and earnest in its pursuit.

She had sufficient knowledge of the Gospel to be convinced that peace with God could only be realized by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; but it was in her nineteenth year, while listening to a discourse delivered by her father on these words, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him," that she became individually conscious that she did, as a sinner, lost, guilty, and with no availing plea of her own, accept and close in with Christ as her Saviour and Lord ;—

and now commenced a life of faith in Him who loved her and gave Himself for her. From this time, drawn by cords of love, it was her aim and delight to be manifestly an epistle of Christ—to glorify her God on earth, and to live for the welfare of mankind—and for the promotion of that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

HER MARRIAGE AND RESIDENCE AT
ST. NINIANS.

IN the year 1804 Mary Russel, then in her twentieth year, was married to the Rev. W. Sherriff, who, for eighteen years, had been minister of the parish of St. Ninians. This marriage was entirely satisfactory to her parents, and, on many accounts, could not fail to give promise of future happiness to the youthful bride. When her father, on the morning of her marriage, gave his daughter to the husband of her choice, he

said, "We give you our child, who has never once disobeyed us."

The parish of St. Ninians lay at a short distance from Stirling. Mr. Shirreff was highly esteemed; his ministry was powerful and attractive, his congregation large, his income ample; he lived and laboured amidst a people who esteemed him very highly, and many of whom had derived great spiritual good from his ministration of the word of life.

Mary Russel had, like many others in similar circumstances, conflicting emotions when entering on this new relation and sphere of duty; for while her future residence was near to that of her parents—her husband the man of her choice, loved for his own, loved for his Master's sake,—while conscious that they were one in Christ, and that they cherished congenial tastes and views, the subject of this memoir left not only a home of many comforts and of great religious privileges, but a mother of singular piety, whose worth she now knew more than ever. The home of her

parents had also the great attraction of the presence and society of a brother, John Russel, whom the Church of Scotland and a large circle of friends, at a later period, highly esteemed, and whom she then knew to be worthy of that esteem.

As she left Stirling on that December morning, and turned to her new sphere of service and duty, her youthful age, her want of experience, her engagements and responsibilities as a minister's wife, in connection with a parish so extensive, a congregation so large, must have awakened deep emotions in a mind so singularly sensitive and conscientious.

Before the reader is presented with her own papers bearing on this period of her life, it may be desirable to state that Mrs. Shirreff entered with great energy and heartiness into all plans of usefulness which lay before her. Availing herself of the advice and experience of her husband, she acquired and deserved his confidence by her good sense and prudence, and became, in

every sense, a help meet to him. She was a constant visitor of the poor, and took great pleasure in ministering to their wants. In this good work she was often engaged as the almoner of her husband's bounty as well as of that of the more wealthy heritors. She conducted herself with such discretion and courtesy in these visits that the labouring class not only loved her as a benefactor, but trusted her as a friend. Though, when needful, a reprover of sin, she knew how to use a mantle of love. Many instances are on record of her success in healing breaches—restoring amity and friendship. It was her firm determination never to ask a secret or pry into the affairs of her neighbours; and if anything was disclosed to her in the confidence of friendship, or with desire for her sympathy and advice, her lips were closed to other persons.

While, however, frequently engaged in these pursuits, such was her habitual communion with God, her reference of every thing to His will, her desire for His honour, that she had more pleasure

in secret intercessory prayer for others than she ever felt in her own ministrations for their welfare. All was sanctified in her experience by the word of God and prayer. In everything, by prayer and supplication, she made known her wants and circumstances, and those of others in whose welfare she was interested, to the God of all grace.

Prayer, however, was not her only service of love, nor was that service confined to the closet, she prayed with as well as for others. A number of females met with her weekly for prayer in an upper room of the manse. She took pains in communicating instructions to some aged females, and on Saturday was accustomed to meet a class of young persons for Bible reading and prayer.

At the same time she was very attentive to all domestic duties. As her family increased she was not only exemplary in the discharge of all maternal offices, but she was also wont to relieve her husband by assisting her sons in literary pursuits and studies.

There were those in this parish, as well as in other districts of the country, who were indifferent or opposed to real godliness. Mrs. Shirreff could not forbear deep solicitude as to their condition, and was accustomed to seize all favourable occasions of leading such persons to right views of divine truth. Often when other resources and means either failed or were not available, she would agonize in prayer for their salvation, and in passing them or their residence would take occasion to present their case before the mercy-seat.

Favoured with a strong constitution, she not only did the work of the day in the day, but her temperament requiring little sleep, many of the night watches were redeemed for God and the more full discharge of labours of love.

She found great advantage from intercourse with pious persons in her husband's congregation. She sometimes spoke of a Highlander—an aged believer, whose hoary head was found in the way of righteousness. Mrs Shirreff having said to him on one occasion, "I will pray for you, will

you pray for me." The old pilgrim took his bonnet from his head, stood up, and with deep solemnity of voice and manner, replied, "A bargain be it, and the angel of the covenant be witness between us." Often, she would say, have I been assisted by my recollection of this scene to make conscience of such sacred engagements.

A deep impression was also produced on her mind by the case of a pious man, who, for a considerable period had experienced intense sorrow on account of the ungodliness of his children. This good man was not only singularly happy in the prospect of dissolution, but God gave him such a persuasion that his prayers would be answered in the salvation of his children, that all anxiety on that subject was entirely removed, and the fact was, that all his children gave evidence, in subsequent time, that their father's God was their God.

Mrs Shirreff's natural disposition was amiable, and so sensitive as to the sorrows of others that she had the greatest aversion to give pain to any

human being. Necessary reproof was to her a serious and unwelcome task. Her acts of faithfulness in this point often cost her more pain than any person could experience while listening to her remonstrance. Sometimes when she had real occasion to find fault she would come to her husband with the inquiry, "what must I say?" His playful answer was, "write down the reproof and read it, for your tongue has never learnt to scold."

During her residence at St. Ninians she occasionally encountered unkind treatment, but this she always desired to become the occasion of awakening in her mind some expression of kindness, or if this was not possible or practicable, then it was her habit to pray for those who had acted improperly towards her, until, as she was used to say, she got love for them, and could forgive and even forget what they had said or done to injure her. Speaking of a lady who had thus wounded her, she said, "She has done me good, for my heart is more full of love to her than before." For many years Mr. and Mrs. Shirreff enjoyed

excellent health, and a large share of domestic comfort, while, to their great joy and satisfaction, the work of God continued to prosper. The number of communicants at one time is said to have been nearly 1000. A new and commodious manse was erected, and a glebe given by the heritors, and there was every promise of future and continued usefulness.

A few extracts from Mrs. Shirreff's Diary, will give the reader the most correct impression as to this period of her life.

She writes February 11th, 1810:—

“Conversion was this day explained from Matt. xviii. 1-4, to consist in turning from self to God as our end, from the world to God as our portion, from the opinions of men to the word of God as our rule.

“Our resemblance, when converted, to little children, consists in humility towards God, appearing in a sense of guilt, and dependence on the righteousness of Christ; in a sense of corruption and dependence on the Spirit as our sanctifier; in

a sense of misery, and our looking to the Spirit as our comforter.

‘This resemblance will appear also in a tractable disposition, the converted man takes the word of God as it is, many a fault he finds with himself for not coming up to its rules, but none with God’s statutes, he is further sensible that he needs instructions, and is open to advice and counsel.

‘This resemblance will also appear in indifference to the world.

‘O Lord, thou knowest how much of the spirit of pride dwells in my heart, for Christ’s sake give me humility, that I may crucify this idol self.

March 10th:—‘This day I have resolved to set apart for fasting and prayer, and to intreat of God for Christ’s sake to be gracious to me, by granting me decisive supplies of grace that I may honour his great name in the discharge of relative duties—that in the approaching time of nature’s sorrow, he would graciously support and comfort me, and cause me to sing his praises either in life or death—that He would bless my

children, and accept through His glorious Son of my desires to give up myself and them to be for ever His. With my Great High Priest I leave the confessions and supplications of this day that He may present them with the much incense of His merits.

‘I have too much indulged a worldly spirit ; Oh that I could learn the happy art of doing everything to and for God. The hidden pride of my heart has been a source of much distress to me, on the slightest temptation it begins to work, even when not outwardly visible.

‘I have been greatly delighted and comforted by some passages in Mr. Rutherford’s letters. He says, “Oh if I were at the yonder end of my weak desires, then should I be where Christ my Lord and Lover lives and reigns, then I should be everlastingly solaced with the sight of his face, and satisfied with the surpassing sweetness of His matchless love.

“I am sure my well-beloved is God, and when

I say **Christ** is God—and my Christ is God—I have said all things, I can say no more.”

Anticipating the birth of her child, and the scene of that birth as affecting herself, she writes:—

‘I have been greatly comforted from the consideration, that happen what will, God lives, my own God through the Son of His love. I do ardently long that the gracious King of Zion might be crowned King of my soul, and that He would bring my every thought into obedience.

‘The Lord enabled His servant to speak once and again to my case, and I was enabled to mix faith with the hearing of the word. How delightful the thought that all power in heaven and earth is committed into the hands of Jehovah Jesus, that He is emphatically called King of Israel, of His own believing people, and that all this power will be employed for their welfare. Mr. Rutherford describes my state when he says, “All I can do is to hold out a lame faith to Christ, like a beggar holding out a stump instead of an arm or leg, and cry, Lord Jesus work a miracle.

Sin, sin, this body of sin embittereth all my enjoyments, but glory be to God who never leaves me without some secret hope that He will appear for me. I am weary of myself, because I do not love God as I should, and as I would, but it rejoices my soul that all God's people are kept by Almighty power through faith unto salvation. Oh, my God, give me grace to look away from myself, and keep the eye of faith wholly on Christ.'

After the birth of her child she says:—

'Before leaving the chamber of my confinement, I would again give myself up to the Lord, with all I have, am, or can do. My God, for Jesus sake, give me Thy Holy Spirit to enable me to live on Thee, more with Thee, and more to Thee than I have ever done. All is of Thy rich grace. In a special manner I would bring the dear babe thou hast given me. Oh grant that I may be a nurse for Thee, regard the offering I make of all my children. May they be for ever Thine, and honoured with honouring Thee in the world.

'Something disagreeable having occurred, I

was much distressed, and poured out my soul before God ; pleading that I might be kept from dishonouring his dear name in the various relations of life in which I stand. It seemed a small matter what I might suffer, if I were only kept from sinning. My gracious God condescended to let me see my sin in my punishment. My sin was the want of fidelity in speaking to the conscience of my servant on spiritual matters, and also the practical idolatry of my wicked heart in not giving God the glory due to His name for all the comforts I have enjoyed in her as the means of conveying God's kindness to me.'

'Blessed be God for all the kindness He has put into the heart of my dear husband. All things are of God, all things are through God, let all the glory redound to His dear name. Grant my husband that direction, assistance, and blessing in the business which now engages him that his exigencies require. Turn all hearts as shall more promote Thy glory.

'With grief and shame would I confess the great

sin I have fallen into this day, in yielding to sinful anger, once and again, about mere trifles.

‘Being in company with some worldly people, instead of seizing the opportunity of catching their souls, I entered too much into their worldly matters, and from a fear of displeasing them was not faithful in reproving sin. Oh, my soul, take shame to thyself for being awed by the presence of poor dying mortals, and practically forgetting the all-seeing eye of the great Jehovah, who is now thy witness, and will be thy impartial judge. I can enter into the very spirit of Mr. Rutherford’s saying, “Since I must have diseases, well is me that I have a day’s work for my Physician Christ.”

‘I am in great concern about the salvation of my children, and especially so as to the eldest. Appear for me, O God, and glorify Thy name in the salvation of my children and servants. I entreat that the Lord would give me His Holy Spirit to lead and enable me to train up my children for His service and glory; that He would direct me to those means

of precept and example which shall be blessed for the attainment of those desirable ends.

‘I desire greatly to humble myself before God on account of my sins of omission and commission in regard to my children.

‘I would ask the same divine direction as to my conduct to my servants. I ask for the salvation of their precious souls; enable me by the whole tenor of my life to recommend the ways of religion to them.

‘This Lord’s day I have been much vexed with wandering thoughts, and have felt much indisposition to the duties incumbent upon me. At times my heart went with the word preached, but again a stupid insensibility and indifference would seize me, I am faint, yet pursuing. Sweet to my soul this day has been the promise, that the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.

‘I have enjoyed much enlargement of soul at the throne of grace this evening. I was enabled to give my beloved Saviour a hearty welcome as my

blessed Teacher, glorious Intercessor, and gracious King ; and did ardently long that He would take the throne and give law to every thought, word, and action.

‘ I got some liberty also for my dear children in casting them over on God ; faithful is He that promised, who also will do it.

‘ When at other times I am scarcely able to utter a word in prayer, it seems to me a pleasant thing to put the charge into Christ’s hands, of getting me Himself. Turn, my beloved Saviour, and be like a roe or a young hart on these mountains of sin and guilt which threaten to separate between us, until the day of glory dawn, and the shadows of sin and sorrow flee away.

‘ I do not know that I was ever favoured with such a sensible manifestation as I have been favoured with for two days. My heart was full of the love of Christ, and admiration of His rich grace to one so vile and unworthy. I would have been happy to have taken my place around the Throne, and to have joined the glorious company in

singing the new song of praise to Him who sits on the throne, and to the infinitely worthy Lamb who bled and died that rebels might live. I cannot express what a sweet life I lived.

‘The action sermon at our Gospel Feast was on the words, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Sweet, exceedingly sweet, was the whole discourse to my soul, but especially when I was reminded that Christ’s teaching us thus to pray, gives us the plea to our God, that his Son has bid us pray for forgiveness ; then again I was reminded that the kingdom spoken of at the close of the Lord’s Prayer must be a kingdom of grace, since there is forgiveness to be obtained in it, and that as Christ has put His amen to the prayer we ought to do so.

‘During the time of the communion I was enabled in a very sensible manner to act faith on Christ ; and though I have had my affections more raised, I never remember to have experienced more calm, firm reliance on Christ for all necessary grace, with a strong practical desire to

come up through the wilderness, leaning on Him for grace and strength.

‘Owing to my indulgence of a worldly spirit in the discharge of duties, in themselves lawful and necessary, I have become very dead and lifeless, especially when attempting the more immediate worship of God in secret or in the family.

‘I read to-day of an honoured servant of God, a minister of Christ, who, dying, left an only son, who faithfully preached the same Jesus that his father had done before. My God knows that this is the height of my ambition as to my son. Lord, I have often attempted to give him up to Thee, and again renew my dedication of him to Thy service. Thou hast implanted within me this ardent desire for the salvation of my children. To Thee I bring them, and with Thee I leave them.

‘I have received signal answers to prayer during this day. I feel it quite a relief to get my thoughts and feelings vented in words. I

am made to adore and admire the infinite condescension of my God. Yet I lament that sin twines itself about even my praises ; and when I am telling what my God has done to save me from my sins, self-applause creeps in.

‘If my gracious Lord would condescend to say to me as to Zaccheus, “Come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house,” my reply would be, “Thrice welcome guest ; come into my heart, reign and rule absolute Lord there ; come into my house, and make each soul a living temple to Thyself.”

‘I have been in a delightful state of mind this day. The world and its concerns have been in their proper place. I have been all alone for God. The recollection of my dedication to God renewed yesterday has been of signal use to me in the course of this day. I have under strong temptations had this consideration pressed on my mind, “Thou art the Lord’s ;” and therefore honour, interest, self-indulgence, and everything else must be trampled upon whenever they come

in competition with the glory of that God who is my all. I often experience when weakest in myself, and made to run to my stronghold, that I come off more than a conqueror.

‘As in the providence of God, I am called to deep humiliation, I would look to my offended Father to show me, by the light of His Spirit, wherefore He contends with me, what special sin may be aimed at in this chastisement. I would, with shame and self-abhorrence, confess that in numberless instances I have walked contrary to Him. Bless, Lord, the present dispensation as the means, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, of making me more holy, humble and heavenly in the temper of my heart.

‘I fear that, even in supplicating grace for the discharge of relative duties, self, base self, has been lurking undiscovered under the name of seeking the glory of God. Lord Jesus, thou hast conquered self for me, enable me to conquer it also.

‘I think the design of God in this event of His

providence, is to bring forth the graces of the Spirit, into lively exercise in my experience, and especially prayer for others. I felt myself this night led away entirely from seeking deliverance as personal to fervent prayer for those concerned that they might be conformed in every thing to the teaching of God's word—I felt great need of humbling providences. The precious words, "God is love," have been most refreshing. I find that keeping close to God, and maintaining secret and habitual communion with Him, makes a little of the creature go a great way.

'A word dropped in conversation, by one of God's dear servants, has been as choice ointment to my wounded soul. He said that God can do anything for Christ's sake. I caught at this saying with avidity, and drew this conclusion—then He can save me, the vilest sinner that ever was, for the greater my sins are, the more glory will redound to God in my salvation. I was enabled to urge the same plea in behalf of my dear child-

ren, and am resolved to be at God's feet, both for myself and them.

‘I often think I am growing worse instead of better, but one thing I do know, that I am living more on my dear Saviour than ever, especially for sanctification. Lord Jesus, thou hast implanted in my soul the ardent desire of living to thee and of being like thee—satisfy the longing soul and fill the hungry soul with thy great goodness.

‘I have enjoyed much sweet communion with God to-day. With Him I daily love to walk, of Him my soul delights to speak, on Him I cast my every care, like Him one day I shall appear.’

On joining in a public fast, she says :—‘I have gone about the form, but felt little of the spirit of fasting. I could do little else but cry to my exalted Saviour to give me repentance. Alas! how little have I been grieved, either for my own sins or for the sins of those with whom I am directly or indirectly connected. I long to possess that mark of God's children, that I may cry and sigh for the

abominations that are done in the midst of the land.'

Her faith and confidence as to the answer of prayers for her children, are thus expressed :—
'God gave me great enlargement in pleading for my children, so that with his promise on the one hand, John vi. 37, and his command on the other, Mark x. 14, he did make me act faith on his word for them, and I have reason to hope I shall meet them on the right hand of my Saviour in that all decisive day. I feel the love of Christ sweetly constraining me not to live to myself, and filling me with an ardent practical desire to live only to God. In the riches of His grace he is bringing my every action into His own obedience, and making me willing to perform the meanest act, according to His order in His blessed word.

'Last week I was almost overwhelmed with a painful sense of my short-comings in duty, but I cast myself wholly on Jesus. Fearing that I had been attempting duty too much in my own

strength, I put His glory into His own hands, and laid myself at His feet, and such a week I have not experienced for a long time. My Lord made His word dwell richly in me, both exciting to duty and deterring me from sin.

‘What feelings I shall have when death knocks at the door I know not, but one thing I do know that one of my joys is, the prospect of a day coming when I shall have for ever done with sin, and serve God with my whole soul as I would.

‘Meeting with some provocation, corruption began to storm very violently, but no sooner did I begin to pray than the storm ceased, and I was made to go and return some good instantly to the person for the evil done. How pleasant in a dark and dead hour, to know that Jesus pleads the cause of His people.

‘Oh that I were cast more fully into the mould of the gospel, that my very nature were holy. I have been much comforted from Isaiah, sixty-third chapter the last clause of the first verse. Lord Jesus, may I touch the hem of thy garment and be healed.

I feel as unable of myself to perform one act of spiritual life, as I was at first to implant that life. I look to thee both as the author and finisher of faith.

‘I have heard a discourse on Exodus xxxii. 26. While the minister was describing the marks of those who were on the Lord’s side, my heart went with every word. The following were mentioned:—determined opposition to sin, maintaining God’s cause in the world, befriending His people, and a regard to all His commandments, As these were explained in their several bearings I appealed to the searcher of hearts that I had experienced them in my inmost soul, yes He knew it all, for His own hand had implanted them there.’

After hearing another discourse on the words, “Look unto me and be ye saved,” she says :— ‘The whole discourse was in harmony with my experience, but one thing was especially sweet to me, viz., that it was the design of God in allowing His people to feel much of their inward de-

pravity, and many infirmities, to teach them to see more clearly their obligations to sovereign grace. I know no words that express what I feel of God's unparalleled love.

'Being in great distress on account of some painful events, I went to God with Hezekiah's words, Isaiah xxxviii. 3, and was made very conscious, that as in a former part of my life I had much dishonoured God in these respects, it was right that I should feel that it was an evil and bitter thing that I had forsaken the Lord of Hosts, and that His fear had not been in me.

'I have been examining myself with regard to the week past, and must acknowledge that I find a growing desire to occupy every talent for God, that the destruction of Satan's kingdom, both in my own soul and in that of all with whom I am connected, is my daily aim, and that it is my desire to be useful to the utmost of my power to all who bear Christ's image.

'The more I pant after conformity to the image of my Saviour I seem the farther from

attaining it. I was so much distressed on this account that I cried to God that He would either take me to his immediate presence, or give me grace to live actively to His glory.

‘On this holy day I have been much vexed with wandering thoughts, but on the whole have had great enjoyment. The design of the discourse was to show that it was our duty to receive Christ Jesus in His several offices, and to do this immediately, without reserve, perseveringly and with all possible solemnity. Lord Jesus, I have again been invited to accept of thee as my Prophet, Priest, and King, with my whole soul I bid thee welcome.

‘I have been much distressed on account of the pride of my heart, and have often on this account been in such a state that my perpetual cry was, “Lord Jesus, keep pride from mine eyes. Make me to learn of thee who art meek and lowly of heart, that I may find rest to my soul.” If I perish I am resolved through grace to continue looking and crying for more undeserved mercy.

‘I can truly say that Jesus is my all. In the prospect of trials that might happen, my soul was completely freed from anxious care by the consideration that the Saviour would be with me, and that as at present I was the object of special care, I should continue to be so, I rested my soul on the gracious promise, Isaiah xxvi. 3.

‘This day being observed as a fast day, I desired to keep it as a fast day for myself. In the morning, while listening to a discourse on God’s design in trials, I was told that He humbles in order that He may exalt His servants ; that He causes them to sorrow that He may fill them with joy. The whole of the discourse was most suitable to my case ; but in attending to another discourse, I felt so lifeless and indifferent that I scarcely knew what to do. Often did I look to the great Intercessor to plead for me. I was, however, arrested and revived by a remark made by Mr. Russel, who directed us to spend as much time as possible that night in wrestling prayer, for the Holy Spirit to apply the precious truths

we had heard to our souls. I did this, pleading the promise, Luke xi 13, and at the same time entreating forgiveness for the iniquity of my holy things.

‘I find every day more and more that my all is in Jesus for time and eternity. Even He shall build the temple of the Lord in my soul and bear the glory. Christ’s mercy and faithfulness in discharging His offices as High Priest and Advocate, have been matter of joyful meditation to-day.

‘I have been much comforted this morning, when on other accounts, almost overwhelmed with a sense of my vileness, by the reflection how my dear Lord, by His all-powerful grace, makes me act towards any who do me the least injury, I get no rest until I do them some good for their evil. If in me, so unlike Himself, He has graciously implanted these desires of returning good for evil, what must this desire be in Himself, who is all goodness, infinite, eternal, unchangeable? And so in my unworthiness I

find a plea for this dearest Lord to extend His mercy and grace. I have often been musing in the course of the day on the free and sovereign love of God to such a rebel as I have been. I have had much forgiven. Oh that I were made to love much, and more sensibly felt Him swaying the sceptre in my soul !

‘I have been in great distress to-day because I neglected to improve an opportunity afforded me in providence of being useful. Justly might my Saviour deny me before His Father and His holy angels, when thus through shame and fear of man I have not openly avowed my attachment to Him and to His cause. With grief and self-aborrence I confess my sin. May my God, for Jesus sake, forgive the shameful part I acted, and let my pardon be sealed and attested by a growing conformity to the will of God. I find the case of the Lord’s dear people lies near my heart, especially when suffering from the painful dispensations of divine providence. I do attempt to discharge my duty in these matters. I have

been pleading for a family in straitened circumstances. O Lord, thou knowest the mother of these children did, when leaving the world, commit them to thy special care. O thou faithful, covenant-keeping Jehovah, who hast all hearts in thy hand, be pleased to raise up some instrument for their deliverance! Lord, I plead for them, being also in heaviness on my own account; for though I am kept from external violations of thy law, alas, what numbers of spiritual sins do I commit.

‘To-day, when listening to a discourse on Deut. xxxiii. 3, I cannot express the delight I felt in the truths announced, but when we were told that believers were “wards” of the Holy Ghost, taking charge for them of the application of purchased redemption, my soul was in a flow of divine love. Holy Spirit, God of all consolation, come and dwell in my soul as thy temple; and bless and ever dwell with thy dear servant my husband. Comfort his own soul with those precious truths he administers to others. Let the

joy of the Lord be his strength. I bring also my children in the arms of my faith, to my most glorious Lord. Blessed Prince of Life, stretch forth the golden sceptre of thy grace. Let these children live before thee. Have mercy also on my dear servants. Thou who knowest all things, knowest how near their best interests are to my heart, and how ardently I long for their salvation. Deliver them from the snares laid by the enemy of their souls for their ruin.

‘While in deep affliction on account of the distress of some of God’s dear children, and pleading on their behalf at the throne of grace, I got a most refreshing view of many important truths, namely, that God in His everlasting love, having sent His Son into the world, would not deny lesser gifts ; that the Son of God, in purest love, enduring agonizing sufferings that rebels might eternally live, was really the true source of all sympathy and love to His poor members, in the minds of others, and if it be found in them from Him, what must it be in Himself? Were

it not that my gracious unchangeable Lord is engaged to carry on His work in my soul, I should certainly faint, in my sore conflicts with indwelling sin and the powers of darkness. My Saviour is again and again pleased to give renewed manifestations of His love, by drawing out my whole soul in love to Himself. I do not indulge myself in the wilful commission of any known sin, nor in the wilful neglect of any known duty. I can appeal to the Searcher of hearts it is my daily, fervent, practical desire to live to His glory, and herein to exercise myself to keep always a conscience void of offence to God and man, but still there are infirmities which cleave to *me*, which make me long for the happy day when I shall serve my Triune God with all my powers in all their might. I am conscious, indeed, of sins of omission in my conduct to my fellow-creatures, yet these are comparatively small when compared with those immediately committed in relation to the sweetest of all names in heaven and earth.

‘In listening to a discourse on 2d Sam. xxiii. 5, I found the views of God’s covenant exceedingly sweet. We were reminded that it was a divine covenant—a covenant of grace, faith which connects us with Christ, the surety of a covenant being the fruit of gracious operation and all the blessing and gifts of grace—it was a covenant of promise—it was a well ordered covenant—there was nothing out of it which should be in it, and nothing in it which should be out of it. It was a sure covenant—as nothing about us could at first attract divine love, so nothing at any future period could ever forfeit our right as believers to the privileges of the covenant, and it was an everlasting covenant ; believers would not only enjoy its blessings through time, but in eternity. I enjoyed much while hearing these precious truths, but on the Lord’s day morning the Holy Spirit condescended to give me such realizing views of this covenant of grace that the greater part of what I had heard was brought back with new power to my soul.

‘I was impressed with the observation of a pious man, who, speaking of angels as perfect lovely beings said, “they were only of use to us when they led us to the King eternal, immortal and invisible.”

‘I gave thanks to my God that through the riches of His grace, though very much engaged in arranging the affairs of the house during the visits of friends—none of these things were permitted to trouble me at all in church. During the greater part of this time I enjoyed uninterrupted communion with my blessed Saviour—and had strong desires to see every idol prostrate, and especially my pride. The constant language of my soul for some days has been, let me live to Jesus, and die to every thing else. I never went to the Lord’s Table with such earnest desire that I might feel the virtue of His death, plucking up and destroying the very roots of this wicked pride of my heart.

‘This day my dear honoured parents have been much in my thoughts, Lord, grant them thy rich

blessing. I grieve that I have not more honoured my God in my conduct to them — richly reward them for all their kindness to me, and if it be Thy will long spare their lives and visit their souls with the consolations of Thy grace.

‘I desire also this day to spread the case of a young man apparently dying, before the Lord, and humbly request what infinite wisdom sees best for the supply of his temporal wants, and especially for the salvation of his soul—that he may be taught all that is necessary for him to know as to God—himself as a sinner, and the way of salvation. Grant, Lord, that he may not see death until he sees the Lord’s Christ.

‘To-day I call upon my soul, and all within me to bless the Lord, and let the good Lord accept of my praises on account of my dear husband, for all Thy rich grace is doing in him, and by him, and for him. Bless him, Lord, and make him a blessing to the church of Christ—give him many who will be his joy and crown in the day of the Lord Jesus ; richly reward him for all the kind-

nesses Thou art daily putting into his heart to show thy unworthy handmaid. I would also give thanks for the glorious surety of the new and better covenant—for my trust in Him, and love to Him, and especially am I bound to give thanks for being kept near the Saviour in every new difficulty.

‘I heard a discourse on James i. 25—the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit as to my conformity to what was therein taught; I did consciously feel the inconceivable happiness of going with all one’s heart into the service of God. I can say wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. Any enjoyment I experienced before I savingly knew the Lord does not deserve the name of pleasure. I know well the artifices of Satan—the devices to keep the soul from loving and serving God at all, and that if he cannot succeed in this he often tries by fiery darts or in more alluring ways to keep souls from going heartily into the engagements of the religious life; but from blessed ex-

perience I can testify that in making the glory of God the great object in all we do, we come to enjoy Him. Oh, my God ! for Christ's sake grant that I may daily know more of this blessed life. Amen.

‘ I was this evening able to pour out my soul before God in confessing and mourning over my greatly aggravated transgressions, my vile practice of extenuating my own sins, and condemning others when they reminded me of them. Oh this vile selfish spirit, when shall I get the victory.

‘ I received much comfort from a realizing view of the union that subsists between the Lord Jesus and His people, His cause and interest are theirs, and their concerns are His peculiar care, but in the after part of the day my unbelieving fears again returned. I have been endeavouring to impress on my mind what is recorded of Abraham, Rom. iv. 20.

‘ I have been distressed this day in attempting secret prayer, by the intrusion of earthly vain thoughts and a spirit of drowsiness. I was

tempted to abandon the exercise, but to this temptation, through grace, I will not yield. Oh forgive, Lord, the sin attendant on my prayers. I cannot live, thou knowest, without daily communion with Thee. I feel thankful for the leave and liberty to make known my requests. Eternal thanks to God for the faithful saying worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.

‘I find it no easy thing to be a Christian, but desire to look to and trust in that blessed Lord and Saviour, who can make me more than a conqueror. May I be prevented from laying down my arms until the palm of victory is put into my hands. Oh ! that I knew what it was to be a sincere, humble, holy, and heavenly Christian !

‘In listening to a discourse on hidden evils of the heart, I was led to see the necessity of continued prayer against these evils in their power and permanence—and of making use of the resources of the gospel in order to obtain the victory. In prayer, that night I had much liberty

in giving God the glory for what His grace had wrought in me, for me, and by me. I had an antepast of the delight of the glorified who cast their crowns before the throne.

‘The sinful infirmities attendant on my prayers were so distressing to me this day, that it seemed as if I were increasing my load of guilt by my very prayers—but my dear unchangeable Lord stepped in for my relief—revived my drooping spirit, and set my whole soul in a flame of love. None but those who have come through the same conflict can understand what I experienced in getting liberty to spread my case before my God again.

‘I want to be able at all times so to speak and act as to be the blessed means of leading fallen souls to Jesus.

‘I was comforted while listening to a discourse on Melchizedek as a type of Christ, by the remark—that as Abraham was met by that king and priest when returning from the battle-field, so it might be with the Christian after struggling

with his enemies. The great High Priest and King in Zion might not be far off, but on his way to meet the soul, with inward strength and support, as Melchizedek met Abraham with the bread and wine. In partaking of the Lord's Supper I was musing on those words, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" and applying them to myself, my reply was, to remember the love of the Lord Jesus—and to put honour upon Him by my obedience to His dying command.

'This day I was enabled with my whole soul to praise God for the whole procedure of His Providence towards me, and even for those steps of it which were most disagreeable to my fallen nature; I saw wisdom, love and faithfulness clearly shining through the whole.

'I derived much comfort from meditating on Isaiah xliii. 25, and felt much liberty in pleading at the throne of grace—that as God's design in the plan of redemption was to bring glory to Himself, to His Son—and prepare a great salvation for all His people—so my peculiarly aggra-

vated sins might not hinder me from becoming an everlasting trophy of His rich grace. I found it an unspeakable comfort amidst all changes that I can apply to an unchangeable God ; nor is it less consolatory to be assured that the tenure by which believers hold their blessings, is the love that the Father bears to the Son—and the complacency which He has in the work which Christ has effected on their behalf. How delightful the thought that he sees and blesses them in Jesus.

‘I have just heard of my sister-in-law’s illness. I would cast her on my beloved Saviour. Lord Jesus, if it please Thee rebuke the fever, spare her valuable life. I do not think there is any one so much a debtor to grace as myself. Sabbath evening I got a sight of the Lord Jesus by faith, and had the persuasion of life in Him quite assured to my own consciousness. Death in its most affecting form appeared to me an easy thing. I thought one sight of the Lord of glory would soon make me forget all suffering here. I was

completely reconciled to the prospect of my dissolution, in the persuasion that I should see Him as He is, and be for ever in His presence. I resolved that no other should share my heart with Him, but that He should always have the supremacy in my soul.

‘I regret and mourn that I have so little of a public spirit—how little I mourn on account of prevalent sins—how unthankful for common mercies—how unaffected with the calamities that are so truly in the nature of divine judgments.

‘I do pray that our national privileges may be preserved, and especially the faithful preaching of the glorious gospel.

‘I have this day also to praise a prayer-hearing God for the recovery of my brother’s wife from serious illness. May God bless and comfort her and her dear husband.

‘I heard a discourse yesterday from Ps. cxxx. 7, 8. It was observed that we were commanded to hope in the Lord. And that we sin as really in disobeying this command as any other.

‘That on which we should exercise hope, was mercy, not such as is with man, but with the Lord. A tender father’s mercy to a child was only as a drop to that ocean of mercy with our God.

‘And the redemption was plenteous too. And respected all our wants, maladies, sins, and apprehended dangers—it was also promised that the Lord would redeem Israel from all his iniquities. This discourse was very precious and seasonable to my soul.

‘I was to-day in great distress about the salvation of my dear children—and especially as to my eldest son. Unbelief in my soul obtained such strength that all the promises I had formerly relied on with regard to them seemed for the time to be quite overlooked and forgotten. I thought it impossible that I could live, if I saw them openly dishonour the God whom I so greatly loved; but at the ordinary reading of our family worship, Numb. xxv. 12, 13 was presented to my mind in such a light, that I was constrained to say, that though

I should never see what I so intensely desired—yet, in the grace and strength of my divine Lord, I would die in the faith—that my promising God would be to me a performing God.

‘A passage in Mr. Newton’s Letters was of great service to me to-day. He says, “If you want to love God better, I believe I can tell you the secret how it is to be attained.

“Trust Him—the more you trust Him the better you will love Him. If you ask further how shall I do to trust *Him*. I reply *try Him*, the more you make trial of Him—the more your heart will be strengthened—venture on His promises—carry them to Him, and see if He will not be as good as His word. I can set my seal from my experience to these directions, as pointing to the right and true course.”

‘Mr. Rutherford says, and I heartily join with him in saying, that he was so confirmed in the truth of God being the hearer of prayer, that he brought everything however small to God.

‘I mourn over the aptitude of my heart to run

away to creatures when I daily experience that they are nothing to me but what God makes them. My declension in spirituality of mind generally begins in this way ; nor am I restored until God by various means enables me to take a new hold of Him as my all. I have heard this day of the death of one of my friends. Grant me, O Lord, all that preparation which I shall need for a happy death, and a glorious immortality. After making many attempts this morning to engage in secret prayer, I could not utter a word, but afterwards engaging in supplication with my dear children, the restraint was broken off, and I had sweet enlargement of heart in devolving all their concerns for time and eternity on my Almighty gracious Saviour.

‘ This day is the meeting of our female society. I wish, therefore, to spend some time in prayer this morning for the purpose of imploring the presence and blessing of God that we may be honoured to bring glory to Him, by becoming the instruments of raising up a spiritual seed to

serve our blessed Lord when we shall be numbered with the dead. The sum of all my desires is, that we may have the Holy Spirit to show us clearly our duty, and to actuate us to its vigorous performance. In listening to a discourse on Isaiah xxxvi. 10, 11, I was much impressed by the application, in which the preacher told us that as Christians and the devoted servants of God, we were not at liberty to break any of His commandments, neither ought we to refuse comfort when God commands it to be given.

‘I was much overcome last night with a view of my exceeding sinfulness. Though I would choose rather to die than deliberately to sin against God, yet innumerable spiritual defilements fill me with shame and distress. I was interested to-day by thinking of the difference between the intercession of Christ and that of the Spirit. Christ appears before the throne and intercedes for His people, founding all His pleas on His own meritorious obedience and suffering on their behalf; but the Holy Spirit intercedes

by enabling believers to plead, He makes intercession within them, with groanings which cannot be uttered. I have had some realizing view to-day of my glorious Intercessor, and have been endeavouring to commit my every care into His blessed hands. I have found the virtue of my dear Lord's intercession, and the powerful grace of His Holy Spirit exciting me to duty.

‘I was in great distress this morning with the painful thought, that instead of living actively to the glory of God, I only dishonoured His holy name in the discharge of relative duties. In the bitterness of my soul I poured out my heart before God, and entreated of Him grace through Christ that I might be enabled to glorify His great name. I was made to look by faith to my dear Saviour. Rejoicing in His unchangeable love, I experienced immediately a peaceful serenity, but was assailed in another way, being strongly tempted to spiritual pride.

‘I was this day disposed to magnify and bless my loving Father in heaven, that He did not

account me unworthy of His correcting hand. I rejoiced that He the Lord of all reigns. I give thanks to the eternal Spirit who gave me this temper of submission to afflictive dispensations of providence. It was very encouraging to my soul to learn to-day in the house of God that Christ is not only able to save to the utmost as to all the parts of salvation, and to the uttermost of time, but that He will carry on the great work of our salvation in spite of all opposition. This last idea was very sweet to me. I give thanks to my God for ardent desire to glorify His name in every relation, and for the many instances in which, notwithstanding sad defects, I have been excited to the performance of duty merely with a view to please God, and with a holy dread of dishonouring Him. I do not remember that I ever enjoyed greater nearness to God or more gracious access and power of pleading before His throne for myself and others than during the season of my confinement and the birth of my child. Several passages of God's word were more

deeply interesting, and on thinking of Revelation xix. 6, my heart went with the sweet words, and I could in some measure join in the song of the redeemed.

‘I now cast myself on my faithful covenant-keeping Jehovah for my remaining days. I praise my God for goodness and grace so largely experienced in this my time of need. I would bring the dear babe the Lord has given me with my other dear children to my Almighty Saviour. With joy, Lord Jesus, I hear thee saying to me, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee wages.” I do look to thee for grace to discharge my duty, and enjoy my high privilege.

‘This day I have been so pressed with a sense of guilt and great unworthiness, especially in prayer, that I could scarcely utter a word, but my bonds were loosed and I was enabled to plead the merits of the infinitely worthy Lamb, and made to see that through Him, though vile and unworthy in myself, I could be pardoned and accepted.

‘I cannot get as I desire at the spiritual discharge of duty. Lord Jesus, help me! Who art thou, O great mountain of sin in my soul? Before the strength of Israel thou shalt become a plain. I recollect the time when the least action as well as the greatest was done merely with a view to please and honour God, and when much of His life-giving presence was enjoyed in their performance; but to my sad experience it is otherwise now. The Holy Comforter has departed from me, and I am not humbled or grieved as I ought to be under this painful estrangement. I was strongly tempted to think that I should witness no change for the better, and that my prayers for sanctification would never be answered.

‘Lord Jesus, let no schemes of my spiritual enemies prosper to draw or drive me from thee. Thou hast brought me out of thine hands, take possession of thy own property, implant thy holy image in my soul. A sensible coldness, deadness, and carnality has of late seized me, so that I am in danger of losing the life of religion altogether.

‘ I have been this day at the Lord’s table, but have not seen the King’s face. I felt in such a dark state of mind that I was doubtful whether it was my duty to go forward, but I was afraid to stay away lest I should give my spiritual enemies an advantage, but I did not feel any grace in lively exercise. Deep and humbling views of my own unworthiness and vileness, with self-loathing on account of innate depravity seem to be the only things increasing in my experience, with strong desires to hide myself in Christ, and from Him to get wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that I may glorify God by the vigorous, useful discharge of every duty and the lively exercise of every grace. I have been much cast down on account of my small attainments, when I have heard other Christians rejoicing in God. Some observations on afflictive providences which I heard yesterday gave me much comfort. It was observed that believers saw the hand of God in these, and looked to Him

for support and deliverance. They were concerned to bring forth corresponding fruit to the design of affliction. This is what I desire with my whole heart.

‘Last night some precious truths were brought to my recollection in a discourse on the words, “Stand fast in the faith.” It was stated that we ought not to take part with the enemies of God when our faith was assailed, but keep steadily in view the ground of faith — especially the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus. It was added, that we ought to make a business of strengthening our faith, and to do so with uniformity and perseverance. We ought also to recollect former experiences in which we have found it easy to believe the goodness of God, the grace of the Saviour, and the love of the Spirit, and to believe that our God is the same in our dark hour of conflict as in our bright day of joyful hope.

‘When I am enabled to go out of myself and live in Christ’s fulness for all I need, there is a manifest difference in the sweet peace and holy

tranquillity of my soul, and also in my outward deportment. I find another thing of immense use in practice : when called to the performance of difficult duty to charge home upon my mind that I am the devoted property of the great Jehovah, and therefore He has an undisputed right to demand what He pleases when He pleases.

‘I have been in great distress this evening. When I had an opportunity of doing a charitable work, instead of doing it merely with a view to approve myself to God, my sole proprietor, I was very sensible of pride, ostentation, and a wicked desire of having applause. Oh, the painful remorse that has since filled my conscience. I regret that when I feel the principle of love to my brethren of mankind very strong, I have not grace to express it in a right manner. I know this happens to me at present, partly owing to violent temptation ; but in my sad experience I find that guilt does not so much oppress me from temptation as from yielding to temptation.

‘I derived this day much comfort from the following view of my state :—I imagined the day of judgment as come, and my case brought forward in this way : Lord, here is a poor soul that looked and cried for the display of Thy rich grace, but looked and cried in vain. But it immediately occurred to me, this cannot happen, it will not be for the glory of God to reject a guilty sinner whose only plea is the righteousness of His dear Son, in whom He is ever well pleased as their glorious surety.

‘It was stated to-day in a discourse on the duty of thanksgiving that we should give thanks to put honour on the Lord Jesus. This is the very thing I would be doing—honouring Jesus in my thoughts, by my words, and by every action. He is indeed a precious Almighty Saviour, and my Saviour too.

‘I have this evening been attempting to mourn over my relative sins, especially as a wife. I would lament my insensibility to the distinguished privilege of being connected with

such an eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, and also my unthankfulness for the high honour conferred upon me in being permitted to do him any service. Richly reward thy dear servant for all his kindness to Thy unworthy handmaid.

‘I took this day comfort from Christ’s command that I should forgive my offending brother not only seven times, but seventy times seven. If he give such a command I could not but hope that He would forgive me. I was refreshed by a few words in a book I read to-day :—“Believer, thy sensible comfort may leave thee, but thy infinitely faithful Redeemer never will.” In the evening I had much enlargement in prayer. I can truly say the Lord is the portion of my soul; there is no person on this our earth that I desire in comparison of the sweet enjoyment of His love.

‘I have been much vexed to-day because I let slip an opportunity of being of use to the spiritual interests of one who has been with us; Yet I think all my prayers for myself are com-

prehended in this—grace to glorify God while I live, and grace to glorify Him in death, by giving testimony to the power, sweetness, and reality of religion. A discourse on adding to our faith virtue was very instructive. This virtue was described as a power given us to regulate our hearts and lives by the rules of the Bible—a divine art or science guided by a sincere desire to be and do what God would have us to be and do ; with hearty and sincere endeavours after this, and also a facility or readiness in doing or submitting to the whole will of God, and a true knowledge of the Gospel, without which we could have none of the virtue described. The whole discourse was very sweet to my soul. Let the savour of it remain with me many days, and may I daily know more of this heavenly science.

‘I have not had so much enjoyment in God this day, owing partly to my sin and negligence in deferring the performance of secret duties, and allowing the time generally devoted to this pur-

pose to be taken up with inferior matters ; but I have smarted for my sin and folly. I lost my spirituality, and got into a bad state of mind. I am afraid I shall leave the world without knowing what practical Christianity is. I seem to do no more than aim at being a Christian. I am much distressed that on the Sabbath I do not get as much as I could wish into the temper and employment of the redeemed in heaven.

‘I would spread before the Lord the low state of our female society, and the sad want of spirituality and holy zeal for the glory of God among us. I have been favoured this day with a penitent, humble frame of spirit, with exalted views of the mercy and grace of God my Saviour. I was enabled heartily to thank Him for the constitution of the Lord Jesus as the great High Priest over the house of God. I would offer grateful praise to the Spirit of God who has condescended thus to visit me, and to melt my very soul in wonder and praise. This has been a sweet evening to me. Blessed be God for the

promise of the Holy Spirit. It is a free gift; and therefore, vile and polluted as I am, I may put in my claim for this inestimable privilege. I heard with joy the statement that we might ask the Spirit, either from the Father or the Son, or ask Himself, to come into our hearts. I was so much delighted with this that I could for some time do nothing but cry for the enjoyment of this gift, as promised 2 Cor. vi. 16.

‘I have been again deeply humbled with new views of my great sinfulness. Yesterday evening, being with the praying society for two successive nights, I was tempted to the same sin, and in some measure fell before the temptation. After the meeting such horror seized my conscience that I was in great distress. I saw clearly that I had sinned away gifts—reason, every talent God had in mercy and grace bestowed; and I trembled in prospect of a fatal sentence of deprivation. In the midst of my deep distress I was supported and comforted by Romans xi. 29.

‘I felt a happiness I cannot express during this day, while weeping at God’s footstool and abasing myself in His holy presence on account of the contrariety in my soul to His holy nature. The very thought of bringing new dishonour to God was as death to my soul. The real cause of grief to me is the secret rising of my heart against the most holy will of God in His providential dispensation.

‘I am often from my inmost soul saying. He doeth all things well; yet whenever a new unlooked-for trial comes, I am the same repining sinner as ever. My Father God, for Jesus’ sake, give me a holy, humble, cheerful acquiescence in Thy disposing will, and grace to make Thy will my very heaven upon earth, as it will be in glory to all Thy redeemed children.

‘This day I have been hearing of the duty of vigilance, and reminded that while we watch in all things, we must especially do this in the performance of religious duties—doing every duty in its season, with all our vigour, and with

fervent prayer. May the Lord quicken me to greater ardour in the Christian race.

‘I enjoyed much of the presence of God in His house of prayer while listening to a discourse from Hebrews viii. 10, 11, 12. Often in the time of hearing I took Jehovah, the God of truth, at His own word, and cried Amen to the blessed mutual relations of the new covenant; and afterwards, whilst partaking of the blessed memorials of my Saviour’s dying love, I was enabled to receive them as a seal and pledge of all the blessings I asked to be given to me.

‘Glory to God for His gracious design in this last dispensation to make the richest manifestations of His mercy and grace, and therefore may I continue to hope. Lord! I am Thine by solemn surrender; and again at this time renew my engagement to be for ever for Thee, and not for another. I do resolve, on the strength of my exalted Saviour, to deny myself, and to live in everything by the rules laid down in Thy word. Lord Jesus, destroy in my soul these selfish

propensities, and take and keep the throne there.

‘I find much comfort from the name of God as the God of truth, and in pleading for the accomplishment in my experience of the several promises contained in the covenant of grace. I have engaged much in ejaculatory prayer, asking and pleading with God from His own name for the performance of the promises, and especially that He would be my God, and make me one of His people. This is the joy of all my joys, that I have His gracious promise in this matter.

‘Yesterday was the anniversary of my marriage. I attempted the duty of confession of sin in this relation, and also of thanksgiving for distinguishing mercies. I saw clearly that my union on earth with the Lord’s dear, honoured servant would form a part of my everlasting song, and I wished to strike the first notes even in the wilderness. I was enabled to cast myself entirely on my God in covenant for all that I might yet require of His power, love, and grace

in this relation. Before I rose from my knees, my gracious Father condescended to give me a new confirmation of His love.

‘I have been enabled this evening to give up my whole self to God, to make Him my all, and from this time forth to look on myself as the consecrated property of a great Jehovah, and as entirely under His management, and therefore bound willingly to receive each various providence as immediately from my loving Father through Christ. My God, teach me, for Jesus’ sake, the holy and happy art of travelling continually bewixt my own emptiness of all good and that fulness that resides in Thy glorious Son as the living Head of influence. I have been attempting to examine not only my outward deportment, but the inmost recesses of my heart. I have also endeavoured to give myself over to God, resolving in dependence in His grace to oppose in my own soul what He seems by His word and providence to be opposing in me. I long exceedingly for the happy time

when my God will make His blessed image in my soul visible to myself and to all with whom I have intercourse. I wished much to employ my thoughts in the morning of this holy day on creating and preserving goodness, but temptation was so violent I could not get the smallest composure. I thought of my precious Saviour's words on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." He suffered the hiding of His Father's face to make way for my enjoyment of the light of His countenance. In the height of my distress I was praising God as holy, wise, and good, and I saw all His dispensations to be so too. I was only displeased with my vile, sinful self.

'After pouring out my soul to God when overcome with a sense of what was evil in my soul, I felt a sweet serenity, and as afterwards I lay down in bed, many rich and sweet promises one after another were sent with power to my soul, I was made consciously to trust that my promising God would be a performing God.

‘All this forenoon I have been in a delightful state of mind, rejoicing in being nothing, that Christ might be all. I seemed not to care what I might suffer or what my fellow-creatures thought of me, if only glory to God would redound through me.

‘Look in mercy, blessed Lord, on the dear orphan, apparently dying. Grant me the high honour of being the instrument of leading this child to Thee, direct to the statement of those truths which thou wilt bless for the salvation of her precious immortal soul.

‘This day I suffered extremity of pain. I was often afraid lest I should dishonour God by impatience, but I praise Him for supporting, preserving, and delivering grace. May the fruits of sanctified affliction be seen in me.

‘I was strongly tempted to an improper spirit this day on occasion of the serious illness of my very dear husband. My good God condescended to show me that all the good I had ever received, or the comfort I had enjoyed in relation to my

husband had come immediately from Himself. I was at the same time made to look to and depend on my faithful God for all the grace I should require if He see good to try me in this matter.

‘My Saviour, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, are Thy peculiar care. Keep me from sinning against Thee, by grieving them, or becoming deficient in love towards them. Dispose and enable me by thy grace to seize every opportunity of promoting their temporal and spiritual interests. I never, at any time, so terribly felt my own weakness as this day. If I could only see how God is to be glorified by my weakness, I would not be concerned about deliverance. I do know that by sore and violent temptations, I am more humbled than by anything that ever happens to me. I learn also, thereby, God’s abhorrence of my bosom sin, pride.

I have been requesting God’s dear children to unite with me in prayer, that God’s gracious design in our personal and family afflictions may be attained. I would confess my sin with respect

to God's dear afflicted people. I have not entered into their feelings as I ought to have done, I have been too much taken up with my own matters.

'To-day I felt much of a tender frame of spirit, with a cleaving to Christ as my all. I had a longing desire to go to His table and take the pledges of His dying love. I had sweet meditation on the words, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted? My petition to my God is, that He would come and dwell with me here by the powerful communications of His Holy Spirit. It is easy for God, in a moment to lose the strongest bands of temptation, and to let the poor prisoner free.

'I feel often a strong temptation to murmuring because the work of sanctification does not go on so rapidly as I desire, but I recollect that the smallest desire of conformity to the will and image of my God calls for devout thanksgiving.

'I think the Lord's design in some recent assaults and conflicts I have passed through, has been to chastise me for not boldly taking part

with one of His dear persecuted children, and on a slight temptation speaking evil of another who seems to belong to the Lord. I desire to justify God in these painful providences. Oh, my soul, stand in awe, and sin not, and be especially careful of falling into those sins which have cost thee so many bitter tears, and for which, if thy Saviour had not died, thou wouldst eternally have been ruined.

‘My soul, learn the holy art of doing temporal things in a spiritual manner, that they may go over into eternity; be not discouraged, the way of the cross is the way to the crown, look with the eye of faith to thy exalted Saviour, hear and recollect His own words, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

‘I have enjoyed much this evening both in social prayer, and in the house of God. While the Lord’s dear servant was describing the different actings of the child-like spirit, I could say through grace the character in all its parts was in some degree my own. May the Holy Spirit con-

tinue to witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, and may the duties and privileges of the honourable relation be performed and enjoyed by me. I begin to see the good the Lord has designed to confer on me, by permitting me to be exercised for more than two years with sore temptations. One design seems to be to make me afraid of sin; the other, to quicken my desires for active devotedness to His glory.

‘I have enjoyed much of God this morning, both in prayer and meditation. The glory of God seemed not only my chief, but only desire. I felt much confidence and satisfaction in God as my God and portion. My ardent desire is to obtain holy submission to the disposing will of God, and cheerful acquiescence therewith, at all times and in all circumstances. I have had such a large taste of these graces to-day that it would be my very heaven on earth to find this my uniform temper.

‘I am much distressed about my dear children, I see every day more of my own inability to train

them up for God so that they may become ornaments of Christ's church upon earth.

'In the prospect of sitting down at the Lord's table, I would again attempt self-examination. Holy Spirit, direct, assist, and comfort me in this important work.

'My soul, dost thou know what it is spiritually to eat Christ's flesh, and to drink His blood?

'Is His blood thy only plea for pardon, His righteousness thy only ground of hope for justification?

'Dost thou daily mourn for offending so good a God. Is it thy greatest grief that thou canst not live without sinning, and wouldst thou gladly die to be free from sin? Dost thou love God in Himself, in His people, in His word, in His ordinances, and providences, and is it thy daily aim to show the sincerity of thy love by a respect to all His commandments?

'In the sight and presence of the heart searching Jehovah, I answer these questions in the affirmative. Oh the riches of sovereign grace.

‘I want to act more like a Christian, and to bring religion to bear on every occurrence. I much want also the charity of the gospel.

‘My God, thou knowest that sin is my greatest burden and perfect abhorrence, and that I daily mourn over its influence on my soul. The height of my ambition is to have the whole mind of Christ.

‘This has been a poor Sabbath with me. I felt much languor of body, which, accompanied with a vain, careless, hard heart, has rendered this a most uncomfortable day. Being almost overwhelmed, I went with three of my children and engaged in private devotion. While reading the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, my heart was like to faint, the description there given being so exactly like what I saw myself to be. Yet I had much enlargement in prayer, my soul was poured out with strong crying and tears. I was humbled to the very dust in thinking of so much in me that was the very opposite of what God is, but I rejoice that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son

cleanseth from all sin. I often think that the life of religion in my soul would die altogether were it not that He who gave it birth continues to sustain and cause it to operate, notwithstanding the dreadful opposition it meets with.

‘I am afraid that, failing to cultivate a holy frame and abstractedness from worldly concerns during the week, and especially on the day before the Sabbath, often hinders my comfort on that holy day.

‘I was much affected this evening in the house of God, while the Lord’s dear servant was describing the malignity and vileness of sin, and comparing our conduct with the character of God as revealed in the Scriptures, and in all His actings towards His believing people. When he said, He is a good God, I instantly replied within myself, He is, and I am a living witness of His goodness. My whole soul was filled with admiration of the patience and long-suffering goodness of God to me a vile sinner, and with loathing and indignation as to myself.

‘ I have been feasted all this week with my last Sabbath’s provisions. The text was John x. 9. Blessed be God for the open door of access through the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus. This is the way in which I have constant daily entrance ; other plea have I none. Grace has laid the foundation of the spiritual building in my soul, grace is rearing the superstructure, and rich grace will at last bring forth the headstone of glory with shoutings of praise to the glorious Builder.

‘The Lord is bringing to my painful remembrance the sins of my youth, and I have been attempting to humble myself before Him on their account. In the midst of these distressing thoughts I was much comforted from the consideration of the perfect knowledge of the great Jehovah. Not a single painful occurrence escapes the notice of Him whose tender mercies are over all His works. Oh ! for faith to rest satisfied in the dark hour, that light will arise. Though as a justly displeased Father, God may seem to

frown, yet He is a Father still, and so it will appear in the issue. I would humbly pray, O my God, for thy pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace as to my natural quickness of temper. I would also praise the Lord for all His goodness during our late season of communion. I bless Him for His presence with His servants, for the precious truths they declared, and for the sweet revival of soul which I experienced at the table of the Lord while singing Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14. I pleaded for the accomplishment of these words in my own soul, in the congregation, and in the experience of particular individuals in whose best interests I felt specially interested. It was a precious season to me. I found Him in Bethel, and then He spoke with me by His Spirit.

‘This morning I spent too much time in bed, and so lost much of the sweetness of intercourse with God. I have been vexed all day with a careless, carnal, wandering heart.

‘I heard a discourse to-day on Col. i. 19. The views given of Christ’s fulness were very delight-

ful to me. We were told there was a fulness of perfection in a Saviour, a fulness of merit to justify the most guilty, a fulness of grace to sanctify the most unholy. I could do little else in time of hearing but cry to the Holy Spirit to enable me to realize these precious truths.

‘Yet a sense of my useless unprofitable life and of sins of omission in not reproving sin, and exciting others to duty when I might have done so, greatly distressed me, but in singing the forty-third psalm, such a light was thrown into my mind that all the previous darkness fled away. It is impossible to describe what I then enjoyed. I could appeal to heaven and say that God was my chief delight, the centre of all my hopes and happiness.

‘My gracious Father through Jesus Christ, thou hast condescended of thy infinite grace to implant in my soul an ardent desire for the salvation and eternal happiness of my dear children. Satisfy the longing soul. Let these children live spiritually and eternally before thee. If consis-

tent with thy holy purposes may they be honoured with greatly promoting the Redeemer's cause on earth ; if otherwise thou hast determined, may they be fitted for the service of the temple above, where they shall see thy face and sing thy praises.

‘ I heard this day of a most unpleasant matter, which has thrown me into deep distress, as it concerns one who has made an open profession of religion, and who has been much countenanced by me. Lord, teach me how to act so as shall be for thy glory, that on the one hand I may be preserved from false delicacy, and on the other from dealing harshly, recollecting that it is nothing but the grace and power of God that has kept me from falling into sin. I desire to give glory to my gracious Keeper, and humbly pray that His dear everlasting arms of love and power may so sustain me that I may in no instance be a scandal to religion, or give cause of offence to the truly godly. Teach me, my Saviour, what to do

in order to reclaim her who has wandered far from thy fold and pasture.'

On the 14th February Mrs. Shirreff writes :—

'I have heard that my dear father is greatly worse. A violent struggle has taken place between my will and the apparent will of God. In my inmost soul I earnestly desire that God may be glorified, whatever may happen. I feel, amidst all this distress, a cleaving of soul to God as my All. He makes me to sing of His love in the midst of the fire, and comforts me with the assurance of His unchangeable love through Christ. My earthly father may be taken away, but my heavenly Father lives. Exalted Saviour, intercede for me, that my sins, whether known or unknown, which have rendered necessary this chastisement, may be forgiven, and that a favourable answer may be sent to the petitions this day lodged before the throne for grace to glorify thee in this furnace, and for the comfort and support of my dear aged parents. As every ingredient in their cup of affliction has been mixed by thyself,

give them grace to drink it in a manner glorifying to thee and profitable to their souls.

February 22, 1817.—My dear honoured father departed this life last night. Amongst his last words were these: "I am fast going to the haven of eternal rest." The goodness of God displayed in this affliction has been very great. Give me, Lord, a double portion of that Spirit that shone forth so eminently in the dear departed saint, that I too may signally honour thee both in life and death. I have been much comforted in thinking of God as the Father of the fatherless. I have not now an earthly father, but I have a Father in heaven, who will take care of me. The Lord will give grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. I feel as if I had got a new right to God in the relation of Father.

'A sore affliction has overtaken me, I may say with Job, the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me. In the midst of my deep distress my God seemed to hide His face. All was

darkness within. I could scarcely believe that I ever had faith. I have kept this day for secret fasting and spreading out my lamentable case before my God. I could not pray at all, my mind being quite sunk with views of the peculiar aggravations which have attended my sins, and the great dishonour I have brought on the holy name of God by my unholy temper and deportment. My God, pardon, sanctify, and save me for thy name's sake. Amen. I would, as in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, examine strictly whether there be any known sin indulged or any known duty wilfully neglected.

‘On examination it appears to me that the things which chiefly injure my conscience are the following,—giving that place in my heart and affections to the things of time which is only due to God, want of holy reverence and godly fear in the more immediate acts of worship, neglect of due preparation for the Sabbath, much hypocrisy and selfishness in the discharge of relative duties, overlooking too much God's interests in my own

soul, in the family, and in the place where I reside.

‘As I am still in most perplexing circumstances, I have agreed with a Christian friend to keep some time this day for fasting and prayer, and jointly to supplicate the Lord, either immediately to appear on our behalf, or graciously to take the charge of His own glory, the usefulness of His servants, and the comfort of my dear mother. I would confess with grief and shame that I have been more desirous of deliverance from this affliction, than that God’s holy and wise ends may be answered both with regard to myself and all others concerned. For the corrupt fountain of iniquity within and for these bitter streams which have proceeded from it, I would loathe and abhor myself in the presence of God. I desire the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in my soul as a living principle of all holy new obedience.

‘I heard to-day a discourse on the duties we owe to Christ as the great High Priest. We were

instructed to give due honour to Him in this office, to employ and to apply to Him, to perform those duties which are incumbent on ourselves as priests to God, and to perform them in the manner required. I have been in great distress this morning owing to my sin and imprudence in refusing our servant some liberty, which I ought to have granted. God graciously convinced me I had done wrong, and made me willing to go and acknowledge that I would not have liked her to act so towards me.

‘I have had a conflict this morning with violent temptation. I was brought into that state of mind that I knew not what to do. I appealed to my Saviour God as to His own gracious declaration that He would judge His people and repent Himself for His servants, when He saw that their power was gone. After a short time the strength of the temptation was broken. I have noticed that Satan generally chooses some part of the Sabbath to inflict these fiery darts. This makes me often look and long for that eternal Sabbath

which will know neither sin nor sorrow. I was much refreshed to-day with hearing from a discourse on the words, "Death is yours;" that we ought to live in habitual willingness to die, at the time, in the manner and circumstances most pleasing to God.

'I have been much vexed on two accounts,—first, great imprudence in speaking about things on which I should be silent; and the other is, that instead of bringing forth the good qualities of others, and trying to cover with the mantle of love their infirmities, I sometimes take part in exposing them. I do purpose, O my God, while asking forgiveness, firmly to resist and carefully to watch against every temptation to these sins in future.

'I often lose, through the indulgence of an improper spirit, any small progress I make heaven-wards, and weaken my influence for good with regard to those under my charge, by an undue concern about things of no moment. Oh, that I were thrown into the mould of the

Gospel, **and** sanctified wholly in soul, body, and spirit! Oh, that as with a commanding voice **speaking**, every word and action were directed to the honour of God! Then welcome privations, welcome pride humbled, self mortified, Christ exalted. Oh! when shall my beloved Lord keep His rightful seat in my soul, and for ever thrust out all His and my enemies.

‘A letter full of unpleasant things having been received to-day, I spread it before God. I would be deeply humbled that I receive with an improper temper expressions of contempt, poured forth on me as to my efforts to please God and discharge my duty. I deplore also any words I have uttered as to those who have thus spoken, which might be injurious to their character or feed enmity in my own breast towards them. I ought to have received these things as the wise appointments of my gracious Father, and to love the instruments He chose to inflict them.

‘I would give thanks for what of the Lord’s goodness I have seen in directing and enabling

me to arrange the affairs of my household. I cannot express the sweet communion my soul enjoys with God, even in those matters which the world calls trifling. He is the God who performeth all things for me. The Lord has made me to see how easily He can change the heart, when it is His pleasure. May I not hope He is about to show me still greater things! I have been attempting to cast my burden on the Lord for some days past, and therefore I ought not to meddle with it myself. I therefore desire to stand still and see the salvation of my God.

‘I rejoice in the prosperity of Sion, whether I be honoured in its increase or not, yet when I hear what others are doing in this blessed cause, I may well call myself a cumberer of the ground. Oh! that the happy time may soon arrive when my dear Lord Jesus shall wear the many crowns and when He shall visibly reign Lord over all the earth!

‘When pleading for God’s interposition in some affairs of this life, I had such a clear view

of the emptiness of creatures and of the fulness that is in God, that in holy ecstasy I said, "Nothing can affect the Lord who is mine. All creatures are in His hands. The eyes of the Lord go to and fro through the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him.

'I saw that one gracious design of God in hiding His face so much from me in the observance of secret duties, was to convince me of, and humble me for, the sin of legality which would often attempt to mix up my doings with the all-perfect work of my glorious Saviour. In the prospect of sitting down at the Lord's table I would, as directed, examine myself.

'What is thy design, my soul? Is it not to obey the Saviour's command, and to use this ordinance as a means appointed for thy spiritual nourishment? I would examine whether I possess the character and display the temper of the child of God. After solemn inquiry, I dare not deny God's work in my soul. His rich and free,

and all-powerful grace has changed an enemy into a friend, a rebel into a subject, a slave into a child. I intend in the strength of God to go to the table, that I may receive large accessions of every grace. Oh that the representation of the death of Christ may be the very death of sin in my soul. I desire above all things to get more of the mind of Christ.

‘I have been much comforted in meditation on the wonderful ways of the Lord towards me. Though I see much need for deep humiliation on account of indwelling sin, yet I can do little else but praise. I find it sweet to my soul, that I am commanded in everything to give thanks. I would give thanks for providences, even those most bitter to flesh and blood. My God hath sweetened and sanctified them to me, with a sense of His love, as reconciled through Christ. I would this day give thanks for what I have ever esteemed the greatest of my earthly blessings—my connection with the Lord’s dear honoured servant.

‘My God has made me a friend of the glorious Bridegroom of the church. Thou knowest, O Lord, that I do love Jesus, His people, and His cause. My deepest sorrow proceeds from the weakness of my love. I do purpose to love those who resemble God, and resolve to trample on vile self, when my God requires this sacrifice.

‘I was much interested in hearing what things are necessary in order to an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Saviour. A simple reliance on His grace and merits—dependence on the influences of the Spirit, studying personal holiness of heart and life—concern for the salvation of others—a wise improvement of the afflictions and temptations of this life—and perseverance in the exercise of grace, until the end of life.

‘I have felt much indisposed to engage in the duties, or to enjoy the privileges of the Sabbath. I mourn the want of due preparation. They are always the sweetest Sabbaths to me that are

much prayed about, and longed for through the week.

‘I have resolved to set apart some time this day for fasting and prayer. And as turning from sin to God is one of the duties of such a day, I would, in the strength of God resolve that as I have done iniquity, I will do so no more, especially I resolve to guard against my besetting sin of pride—and to cherish a sweet, meek, gentle, disposition, that if I am called to suffer, I may suffer as a Christian.

This day I was made to perceive and claim my interest in the love of Christ. It was delightful to me to hear that the Lord Jesus would never change in His love—He might hide his face—but change He never would, but would rest in His love, and joy over me with singing. I could, through rich grace, say—the Lord is my portion. It is now nearly twelve years since I received the assurance of His love, and though I have passed through many changes, yet have I never been allowed for any length of time to

doubt God's everlasting love in Christ Jesus, to me a vile sinner. Well may I adore and admire His free sovereign love. I had much sweet communion with God last night. I was so much overcome that for a long time I was incapable of sleep. The Lord's goodness to me is very great. Oh for more gratitude, and grace to express it.

‘I am sorely grieved on account of abounding iniquity, and the little reverence for God's holy name and day I see all around. Oh that God would put an end to vice and immorality. I have no doubt that God has His hidden ones in this place—but the generality serve another master. My soul, I charge thee not to forget what sovereign grace has done for thee. My God, increase my sorrow for dishonour done to Thee—increase my holy zeal to reclaim all within the reach of my influence from the service of sin and Satan. I have now come to a difficult step, and I do not know which way to turn. Condescend, O Lord, to say to me, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” I do not

wish to choose for myself ; my highest aim is to be honoured with honouring my God, and to be led in that particular way which shall most advance this great end.

‘I would be kept from injuring the character and reputation of any. When necessary, let me speak to themselves alone, and let my exhortation to them be preceded and accompanied by prayer for the divine blessing. Let me always attempt this painful duty with prudence and secrecy. I have not for many years gone to the Lord’s table so distressed with a carnal, worldly heart as this day. I was almost overcome with a sense of guilt and unworthiness. In this state I continued until in the course of the sermon it was said that Christ entered to His glory for the express purpose of managing the concerns of His believing people, and that He is still as mindful of them as ever, that they may safely trust their living Saviour whatever their exigencies may be. I was comforted by this, and enabled to look to Jesus by faith for all the grace I required.

16th November 1819.—‘I received last night the mournful intelligence of my mother’s death. I have no reason to grieve on her *account*, but on my own. I have lost *in this* most beloved relative a *most tender*, affectionate mother, and a *fervent* wrestler with God. I have reaped much from her prayers. She is now enjoying the fruit of her faith, love, humility, and self-denial. She was a bright pattern of every good work. While I shed many tears in recollecting one so very dear to me, both by ties of nature and grace, I would give thanks for my living Saviour, and look to Him in this sharp trial, to remember me, and make good His own promise in my experience, (Psalm xxvii. 10.)

‘I have lately as it were been made to shake hands with death by the removal of my beloved and much valued mother into a better world. Since that time a dear Christian friend, with whom I often used to take sweet counsel, has got home to her Father’s house.

‘As I have now entered on another year of my

married life, I would with deep humility confess the sins with which I have been chargeable in this relation, as well as give thanks for the distinguished mercies which in this relation I have so largely received. The last year demands my loudest, warmest songs of praise. Lord help me to feel and express gratitude to Thee the kind Author of all my mercies, and to Thy dear servant whom Thou hast chosen to be the instrument of conveying so much of Thy goodness to me.

‘ I see every day more need of holy vigilance. Through inadvertency, I interfered in a business that I ought not, yet I was not conscious of a selfish aim, but of a desire for God’s glory and the comfort of His dear people. My desire was to promote their holiness by stirring them up to obey Christ’s new commandment. The matter has not ended as I desired; but Lord, plead my cause in the breast of those who are dear to Thee, that they may not take offence at my interference, and let not Thy cause suffer in the slightest degree by my imprudence.

‘I have just been hearing what ought to be the exercises of God’s people in afflictions.

‘They ought to receive them as coming from God, as sent in love and for their good. They ought to honour God’s sovereignty in them, and always believe them less than their sins.

‘They ought also to remember that afflictions borne in a right spirit, tend to glorify God, to benefit others, and to brighten their own crown of glory.

‘They must also, in affliction, look to God for support and deliverance, and be very diligent in investigating God’s design in their several trials. This night I would ask seriously, what is the design of God’s afflicting hand as to myself and my family? I desire to be in perfect harmony with God in His purpose, whether it be to induce a deeper humility, or to put a check on my proud, discontented temper.

‘I was this day reprov’d, and felt too much indignation at the instrument, and lost an opportunity of glorifying God by much submission to His hand in this affair.

‘On this 18th of December I have implored in special prayer that there may be a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit on this district, and especially on our congregation, on our ministers, and on each of the people.

‘I bear before the throne of grace the case of my dear brother and his wife in their affliction. I supplicate also on behalf of a family in our parish suffering in consequence of sin. Their sin I would deplore, and ask that repentance may be given to them. I fervently ask that our dear assistant minister and his wife may with one heart and soul unite in promoting God’s work in this place.

‘I had much enjoyment this morning while engaged in prayer with my dear children. I would hope, yea, I firmly believe, that they shall be brought under the power of saving grace. I feel an ardent desire to be the honoured instrument of bringing souls to God by precept and example, and though my gracious Lord may not see good in this to give me the desire of my

heart, I trust He will signally own my dear children with promoting the Redeemer's kingdom in the several spheres which He calls them to occupy. I should count myself happy indeed if our dear children were made to know the God of their fathers.

‘I felt both humbled and comforted while hearing the word. When the signs of spiritual declension were stated, I saw each of them to exist in myself. I do bitterly mourn over my fall from former spirituality, and desire, in the vigorous use of appointed means, to seek restoration.

‘When the minister was speaking of those whom the Lord made welcome at His table, he described them as deeply humbled under a sense of their own unworthiness. I would without hesitation lay claim to this feature of character. I had been earnestly pleading for the Holy Spirit, and was still refusing to be comforted, when the Lord directed His servant to some observations which were exceedingly applicable to my state. He said, if there is any soul here which is ex-

periencing, as it were, a death in all its prospects, let that soul remember it has no name to plead but the name of Jesus—no righteousness but His righteousness—no strength but the strength of Jesus—yet that soul has made considerable progress in the journey to heaven—and in due time the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun—and the light of the sun as the light of seven days. This was exactly my case. I had nothing to plead why I should be pardoned and accepted, but the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus freely made over to me in the call of the gospel.

‘I was completely overcome this day with views of the glory Christ will receive from the salvation of believers at his second Advent. The preacher described Christ’s power, wisdom, knowledge, grace and truth, as gloriously displayed in their perfect salvation. When it shall be made known before assembled worlds how much Christ has done for me, and borne with me—how will the glory of His rich sovereign grace shine

forth. And though I do increasingly abhor and detest myself for my base requitals—yet the thought that I shall through eternity bring a revenue of glory to this matchless Saviour, rejoices my very soul.

‘ If Jesus were not engaged by promise to keep me as one committed to His charge, I should certainly despair of seeing God’s face with joy. His own words are, I give unto my sheep eternal life—and they shall never perish, neither shall any be able to pluck them out of my hands.

‘ I set apart this day to the heavenly work of praise, but it is the source of pungent sorrow, on days of this kind, that I have to recollect my past ingratitude. I feel quite overpowered, I can scarcely go on with the service appointed, for I want a heart for this divine employment. I can scarcely get one fixed thought. While asking my Lord’s gracious interposition in some temporal matters I was obliged to desist, and felt afraid that my over anxiety about these matters might be the occasion of God’s hiding His face. I am

afraid also that the unholy temper I too often discover on the smallest provocation, may be another reason of my present distress. I do not reprove with sufficient meekness, nor bear provocations with patience—on the contrary, my pride and passion are often discovered in trifles.

‘I was much cast down this evening on account of the low state of religion in my soul ; but, amidst all, I was conscious that my great end was the glory of God ; and there was a deep impression made on my mind that much of my distress was from the malice of Satan, tormenting me with fears that I should openly dishonour God, and bring reproach on religion. I find a double sweetness in my temporal comforts, knowing well the kind hand from which they come. I am sensible, likewise, that a practical belief that God is my reconciled Father is a great support in all difficulties. To whom can a child in distress run but to its Father. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. I will call upon

the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.

‘I do not recollect anything I have deliberately done for a long time past, but the motive has been the glory of God. I give thanks, also, that I have of late, and for some time past, felt the power of the love of Christ casting out self-love and inordinate attachment of every kind ; yet I confess with grief and shame the slow progress I make in the divine life under such high advantages and privileges.

‘I went this day to hear a discourse delivered by an aged servant of the Lord Jesus. The truths he declared were most precious, but I was perplexed and disturbed by the fear that I was not in the path of duty. The best of men and the purest ordinances are nothing to me except as means of leading me to more knowledge of, and communion with my beloved Saviour.

‘Two things said comforted me. One was that those who had found Christ had seen the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and had laid

hold on the righteousness of the Lord for their justification. The other observation was, that the farther the Christian advances in holiness the more he detests the very idea of his own righteousness as forming the least ground for acceptance with God. I could set my seal to these as truths. Righteousness for justification I have none ; sins I have many. God be merciful to me a sinner.

‘ I have now the prospect of soon being called into the field of trial. Oh, that my God may be with me by His Holy Spirit, and enable me to glorify Him greatly, either by active service, or by patient suffering ; and as of His grace He has provided for His believing people the chambers of His glorious perfections, and given them an invitation to enter thereinto, I would this evening enter as invited. My desire is, that every circumstance in my life and death may be so arranged that He may make to Himself a glorious name.

‘ I have this day solemnly promised to give

over my every concern, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, into the hands of my faithful Saviour; and do resolve, through His grace, to welcome every providence, pleasant or painful, and to receive them as coming from Him, and to trust in Him that He will direct all for His own glory and for my good.

‘The dear, holy, humble, despised followers of my meek and lowly Lord have, next to Himself, the first place in my heart. With them I love to converse; and the nearer their resemblance to Christ, the dearer they are to me. I have often felt the fire of divine love fanned into a holy flame by means of this Christian converse.

‘I am this evening called, in God’s providence, to discharge a duty which I have neither the inclination nor the ability to perform. I would look to my gracious Father to give me, for His dear Son’s sake, the gifts and graces requisite for this service.

‘I have been attempting to join with God’s people in praying for an effusion of the Holy

Spirit ; but, alas ! mine have been cold prayers, and put up under the sensible impression of the want of this life-giving Spirit. Yet my chief and only joy is a persuasion that God is reconciled through Christ. My daily grief is that I live and act so unlike one who professes to be His child, and that I do so little for the promotion of His kingdom in the world. For this it seems as if I could never forgive myself. I feel as if even in heaven there would be cause for weeping for sin, if I did not read in God's Word that He shall Himself wipe away all tears from His people's eyes.

'The Lord Jesus and His great salvation are very precious to me. I rejoice to be an eternal debtor to free, sovereign, all-powerful grace. I can do nothing towards saving myself.

'The Lord was pleased to grant His gracious presence yesterday. The promises and threatenings of God were fully laid before us. I felt so much that I could often have cried out with holy joy and godly sorrow for sin. I would also give

thanks for the immediate interposition of my God in a certain matter, and would receive it as a pledge that all my future paths shall be directed by Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

‘The Lord has brought me into great favour with many of His dear children ; but if they knew what my beloved Saviour knows, they would not regard me as they now do.

‘It has been my delightful employment on earth when alone to meditate on God’s wonderful works, and to talk with others of them. I have no doubt that it will be a part of the happiness of heaven to recount the dangers and snares that we have escaped in our journey through the wilderness. Surely in these exercises our love to our blessed Lord will be inflamed. His power, wisdom, and grace will shine so brightly in our view, in our protection and guidance by the way, and in at last giving us a safe outgate, and blessing us with the immediate vision and full fruition of Himself in heaven.

‘ I am seizing the silent watches of the night to seek God’s face, and spread before Him all my situation, and also to ask that light and direction which in my present circumstances I so peculiarly require. To the Lord Jesus as the great Prophet of the Church I would look that He would guide me into all truth, and in the matter which led me at this time to the throne to cause light to arise that in every particular I might know His holy will. Lead, O Lord, Thy dear, honoured servant, my husband, in a straight path, wherein he shall not stumble.

‘ I enjoyed much in the house of God while the preacher was describing sanctification as a privilege belonging to the people of God. I have too often been vainly endeavouring to sanctify myself. I would confess both this as a sin, and as fruitless, and would apply to God, through Christ, for this precious privilege.

‘ I purpose, through grace, to spend this day in praise. I feel much tempted to indulge another spirit, but, in the strength of Jesus, I will attempt

the heavenly employment. I bless God for my dear parents, for their pious instructions and holy example. I bless Him for hearing their prayers for me. I praise God that I am so nearly connected with such an eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, for the great tenderness and affection it has pleased my gracious Father in heaven to put in his heart towards myself. I would give thanks on behalf of our dear congregation, and for the success which has attended the labours of both Thy servants among that people.'

On the *5th of January*, 1823, Mrs. Shirreff writes, 'I have chosen this night for prayer to God as our business is expected to be decided to-morrow, that my God and Father may give saving illumination to myself and my husband. To him especially, that special direction which thou hast made him seek from the exalted Prophet of the Church. My God, thou knowest the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed, lead us in a plain path, for thy great name's sake. It has pleased thee to make thy dear

honoured servant a fruitful branch in thy vineyard, and also to make him willing to sacrifice all his temporal advantages at thy call in thy word. If it please thee cast him not out altogether, but graciously provide for him a place where he shall signally honour thee. Save us, O our God, as far as thou seest good, from reproach and disgrace, in simply following the directions of thy written word; but whatever such reproach may fall upon us, may we be enabled to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for thy most blessed name.

‘Be with thy dear servants this day in the presbytery. Give thy dearest servant my husband that measure of favour in their eyes which shall be most for thy glory and his good.

‘I would further supplicate of my gracious Father that if this sacrifice of honour, reputation, property, and all that the world calls valuable be necessary for His glory and for promoting the Redeemer’s kingdom, nothing may hinder us from putting it in execution. On the other hand, if it

be not required, I pray that by an immediate interposition from heaven it may be prevented, I desire not in the smallest instance to choose for myself. I would in the exercise of faith commit the whole matter to God, and charge my soul to believe that all will end well, and that we shall be led in paths of righteousness for His great name's sake. My prayer is, that if the sacrifice be really made, it may be a testimony to the world of the loyalty of my husband to his gracious Master King Jesus, and also that it may be of service for purifying the church from its dross, and for accelerating the latter day glory.

‘I would deeply humble myself before the Lord for that want of supreme love to Him which has made me so unwilling to resign all at my Lord's call, and has often induced me to bring forward arguments of usefulness, &c., in order to prevent it.

‘I would give thanks for the large sphere of useful labour I have so long enjoyed—for grace given to honour God and benefit others; and I

would in the exercise of thanksgiving solemnly surrender all. I humbly pray that my place, who have been a poor cumberer so long, may be filled with one having more of the spirit of the Gospel, and better qualified to promote the Redeemer's interest. I would with holy joy and humble gratitude cheerfully fill up any situation my dear gracious Father sees good to provide.

‘I would in Jesus’ name ask all the provision we may require, the blessing of God on what we now possess. In the abundance of all temporal comforts I have clearly discerned the hand of God, and have been enabled to receive and enjoy all as coming immediately from Him. Though our circumstances in some respects must be changed, I shall still trust in the power, love, and faithfulness of my unchanging Jehovah.

‘By a singular interposition of providence the resignation has been prevented, but as we are still called to go, O Lord, command new light to shine into our minds, that with enlightened conscience

every part of duty may be performed to thy glory and our profit.

‘In my present circumstances I am shut up from myself and every creature to God himself. Here through grace I will abide. Return to thy rest, O my soul ; too long hast thou wandered to one creature or another, I now charge thee to wait on God alone, to trust the grace, love, and faithfulness of Jesus. Lord Jesus, I commit to thee the charge of sanctifying and saving my sinful soul, the charge of the precious souls intrusted to my care, the charge of all my temporal matters, especially that one wherein thy own glory and the interests of thy kingdom are so deeply concerned.’

On occasion of another meeting held respecting Mr. Shirreff’s resignation of his charge at St. Ninians, Mrs. Shirreff thus pleads :—‘ Grant, Lord, thy sweet life-giving presence both to my beloved husband and thy dear servants who are this day to unite with him in prayer. Let love to thee their God be kindled in their breast.

May they deal kindly with thy dear servant for thy sake, and may he, in the riches of thy grace, feel disposed and enabled to love and honour thy image in his brethren. I would give thanks for the appearance of my God on behalf of His unworthy handmaiden in the business as to the deaf and dumb children, that so much success has been already granted to this undertaking. Give me grace to be faithful to thee, O Lord, and to those whom thou hast disposed to place confidence in me. I wish much to unite with my husband to-morrow in humbling ourselves before our God, and in asking that special direction which our peculiar circumstances require.

‘O Lord, we thy children have often jointly sought thee in this matter. Thou hast access to all hearts, and art witness if any motive sways us but a regard to thy glory and thy directions in thy written word, and as thou hast brought us often to cry with earnestness, “Father, glorify thy name!” wilt thou not answer us as thou didst our great representative and surety: “I have both

glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Let it not fare the worse with thy servant on my account, let me not be to him as Jonah in the ship. My God, for Jesus' sake, hear me for thy servant my husband, loose his bond, and set him at liberty. We are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are become an infamy of the people, for no reason but that we fear to offend thee by rejecting thy instructions in thy written word. Former friends have forsaken us in our distress. We have the near prospect of being called to pass through deep waters. Our gracious High Priest, not only go before us to stem the raging flood, but likewise go with us.

'I have often thought that with the greatest cheerfulness I could submit to the derision and reproach of worldly people, but to see God's people in arms against us has added tenfold to the stroke. Lord, I ask divine illumination in the written word and on the path of duty. If thou art calling my husband and thy servant to resign this place and sphere of labour, let it be

done in the time, manner, and spirit which shall bring most glory to thee, and let nothing prevent it; but, on the other hand, if this resignation of his position is not required, intimate to him thy will. My desire is, O Lord, for grace to act in a right spirit, whatever may be the issue. In examining my spiritual state I often think I am not so humble, spiritual, or self-denying as I formerly was. I recollect with a heavy heart the sweet communion with God I enjoyed on Fast days and Thanksgiving days, I may add almost every day, living like one about to enter heaven, but yet I cannot deny that I am conscious of a sensible growth in my perception of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus, and of His exact suitableness to my case, as a poor lost ruined sinner in myself. I find a cleaving of soul to Him in all conditions, and a growing confidence in God as my reconciled Father, so that while I look for nothing, as given for my own sake, I expect all things for Jesus' sake. Driven away from the feeble weeds of my own righteousness,

I have got firmer ground to stand upon, even the Rock of Ages.

‘*May 26th, 1823.* God has graciously answered our prayers, and made the path of duty plain. This day the letters are sent away to call a meeting of Presbytery for the purpose of receiving the resignation of the charge of the parish.

‘Thy unworthy handmaid, O God, looks to Thee in the name of Jesus for all the blessings which those sweet words intimate—I am thy God. I have cast myself, my dear husband and children, over on Thee. Give us what Thy infinite wisdom sees best. The Presbytery have not accepted my husband’s resignation, but have named the 17th June for that purpose. I know my God has some design to answer by this delay. May His holy purposes be fulfilled in us and by us. By the step we have taken a kind of death is brought on all our worldly prospects. Do not cast off Thy dearest servant, O Lord, who has cheerfully forsaken all that the world calls dear, to follow Thee. Let his interests be Thy care.

‘As our circumstances require us to keep very near to God—and as we need more than ordinary communications of His grace and Spirit, my husband and I have agreed together to seek special direction—for we have not passed this way heretofore. Lord, a new scene now opens before me. I want to take a new hold of Thee as my righteousness and strength, that with implicit confidence I may trust Thy love, power, and faithfulness. Bless our dear congregation, and Thy young servant who labours among them—let their interests and his be Thy peculiar care. Accept of my desire to praise Thee for the great kindness we have received, both from the congregation and him. If we must part, may it be in love and peace, and with holy Christian affection for each other.

‘Our business in the Presbytery is again delayed, contrary to our expectations and wishes in our present circumstances. I would praise God for his great goodness in turning both the

hearts of friends and enemies towards my very dear husband.

‘ I have found this practice of setting down the various feelings of my soul, signally beneficial in the guidance of the blessed Spirit, for keeping me near to my God. If at any time I discontinue the practice, I feel the sad effects in a careless estranged state of mind. Before the next approaching meeting of the Presbytery on our case, I purposed again to spend a night in meditation and prayer. My strength would not admit of this protracted engagement. Be with me, O my God while I yet remain here—and when called to leave this place, may I signally enjoy thy comforting presence, I cannot leave without Thee. Though the world were laid at my feet, it would not give me the happiness that I chiefly desire. God in Christ, with the Holy Spirit, is the portion I must have, or be miserable for ever. Come, then, and dwell in my soul, and grant increasing conformity to Thy image and will, and rapid preparation for Thy full enjoyment in heaven.

The preceding extracts from Mrs Shirreff's papers, written during her residence at St. Ninians furnish the best exposition of her principles, and of her manner of life. The perusal of these records may furnish an illustration of their value when employed, as in this case, not only to cultivate inward religion, but to aid in the practical application of the truths of the gospel to all the duties of social and relative life. One can easily imagine religious journals so constructed and managed, as to be neither profitable to the writer, nor calculated to serve the interests of vital piety ; but can any pious person doubt the utility of these records of a mind struggling against all that is evil—aspiring after perfect conformity to the divine will, seeking to discharge to the fullest extent every relative duty—sensitive of the least obliquity of thought or unholy desire, and self-judging under the influence of a conscience at once tender, susceptible, and enlightened by the word and Spirit of God ?

Mrs. Shirreff's religion was a life—a real,

habitual, earnest, persevering life of godliness. Hers was a steady walk with God. Hers was a mind richly spiritual amidst relative duties and social engagements, and efforts to do good of a very absorbing kind.

The whole tone and spirit of her writings attest her sincerity. The prevailing sentiment as to herself, is one of humility, of contrition before God. The temper of one to whom sin in every disguise, and in every possible expression, had become hateful ; and whom the habit of communion with the Almighty had made, by the influence of the indwelling Spirit—sensitive to the least spots and wrinkles. She saw, she deplored the weights, the easily besetting sins which impeded her course. A hasty word, an improper disposition towards any human being—the slightest omission of duty, furnish matter for lamentation ; and no conviction is more forcibly brought home to one's mind after reading her papers, than that they present the workings of a mind that herein exercised itself, that she might

have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. Let the reader judge if these are not the inward breathings of one to whom consecration to God's glory was the very first principle and aim of her existence. Yet this devotedness to her Maker is accompanied with the most acute sensibility as to the duties of relative life. Some of the most affecting passages in her diary are those in which she deploras her deficiencies as a wife, a mother, a friend ; yet in the hearts of all her children she left the impression of a loving, faithful, devoted parent. Her husband would often, in converse with his friends, describe her as a living example of all that a virtuous woman and wife ought to be—while at the same time she was alive to all opportunities of usefulness.

But the reader of her diary will find little said of such engagements—or of the various plans of doing good which she originated or pursued—except in the way of regret that so little was done,

and that done, with so much conscious imperfection.

In addition to her usual habits of prayer, scripture reading, and devout meditation, Mrs. Shirreff was accustomed to observe special seasons for fasting, devotion, and fervent humiliation before God. In these seasons *her* sins were confessed, renounced, and divine aid sought for the future, as well as forgiveness for the past.

Not only did she join most cordially in what are called in Scotland the church fasts, held before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but she had also her own special times appropriated to the great work of inward self-examination and mourning for sin. Nor was she less exemplary in the exercise of every grateful emotion to her heavenly father. In every thing she deemed it her duty to give thanks ; while there were seasons in which she recorded her mercies—and acknowledged them in a more specific way.

HER REMOVAL FROM ST. NINIANS
TO GLASGOW.

It is not the design of these papers to delineate or detail the reasons which induced Mr. Shirreff to withdraw from his connection with the Established Church of Scotland, and to resign his position as the minister of St. Ninians.

Mr. Shirreff, after deliberate and prayerful investigation of the word of God, could not conscientiously practise the baptism of infants. On this account, as well as in consequence of a change in his views as to the nature and constitution of the church of Christ, he sent in his resignation. This resignation was not immediately accepted—and in the meantime Mr. Shirreff was pressed with arguments and motives of various kinds, and from different quarters, to reconsider the points at issue.

Mrs. Shirreff not at that time concurring in his views on the subject, ventured to remonstrate with him, and to urge his compliance with the

request of parents, who so urgently desired that he would administer the ordinance of baptism to their children. His characteristic reply was: "How can I stand up to baptize an infant in the name, which means, among other things, by the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, when there is no such authority, and when I know that there is no such authority. I would not do it for the world."

To his excellent wife, whose attention was necessarily called to the same Christian ordinance, Mr. Shirreff said, "Examine your Bible thoroughly, do not follow me in matters of religion without having personally examined the ground of your faith and obedience. Whatever is not of faith is sin. There must be knowledge, faith and obedience in acceptable worship."

It is quite clear from Mrs. Shirreff's papers that for a considerable time she regarded with most painful apprehension the change of views which severed her from the church of Scotland. She had been nursed from the infancy of her religi-

ous life in its communion. It was the church of her fathers ; her brother held an important position as the minister of Muthill. Her relations and religious friends, and all her ties, except the one now spoken of, were on the side of conformity. The comfortable manse, the female prayer meetings, the sphere of Christian exertion, the esteem of the heritors, the full church, the cordial satisfaction expressed as to her husband's ministry, and the importance of his position and her own, combined, with the regrets and remonstrances which assailed her from almost every quarter, to render the departure from St. Ninians no ordinary trial.

Mrs. Shirreff had the strongest faith as to the sincerity of her husband's convictions on the subject and mode of Christian Baptism, and her own, after prayerful investigation of God's word were expressed by her baptism in water as a believer in Jesus, and in obedience to the laws of his kingdom.

Mrs. Shirreff says, on the occasion of leaving

St. Ninians—"By the step we have taken a kind of death is brought on all our worldly prospects, but to God as our covenant God I look for all that is implied in those words, I am thy God. "Father glorify thy name, and place us where we shall most glorify it, and promote the purity of thy church and so hasten the latter day glory."

The impression produced on the mind of Rev. John Russel by the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Shirreff from this important sphere of labour, may be ascertained from the subjoined letter to his sister.

"I cannot tell you, my dear sister, how much I feel for you both at this time. I am assured of the uprightness of Mr. Shirreff's views, at the same time my carnal and selfish heart would have wished that he had been so guided in his deliberation as to have seen it his duty to follow the course in which he has experienced so much of the divine countenance. The Lord does all things well, and I have no doubt you will both see good coming out of the present dispensation,

painful as it is to flesh and blood. The Lord has done much for you already, and since he hath made you willing to sacrifice all to his glory ; he will glorify Himself by communicating to you those supplies of His Spirit which will keep you in perfect peace. Should Mr. Shirreff abide by his present decision, we may well take up a woe for St. Ninians. How is the place of such a man of God to be filled up?"

Mr. Shirreff, during the year 1823, became the pastor of a Baptist Church in Glasgow. On the 24th Nov., after her removal to this city, Mrs. Shirreff writes,—“ I have enjoyed much in Christian conversation this day. If it is so delightful in this distant land to talk about our dear absent Lord, what will it be to see Him as He is, and be made like Him, and for ever enjoy His gracious presence.”

We may ascertain the state of her mind on occasion of her baptism on a personal profession of her faith from the subsequent words :—“ Oh that I may feel the heart-cheering presence of my

God while observing this ordinance of his own appointment, may the Spirit who descended on the great head of the church when He was baptized in Jordan, descend also on me as a member of His mystical body. I have looked forward to this day with peculiar delight, as giving me an opportunity of falling down before my dear but justly offended Father, and of telling Him how much it grieves me that I have acted such an ungrateful part towards Him. There is such a mystery of iniquity within me that a very strict watch has to be kept. I have been eminently guilty in attempting the work of sanctification in my own strength, when I ought to have depended on my Lord alone. Oh! that being buried with Christ in baptism, I may through His Spirit rise to newness of life.

January 18, 1824.—‘ This day I was solemnly admitted into the New Testament Church, by having the ordinance of baptism publicly administered to me. I desire to bless the name of my

God for the most delightful privilege of remembering Christ's dying love.

'This day is set apart for a family thanksgiving on account of the gracious dealings of our God to us strangers in a strange land. The Lord has been nigh unto us in all things that we have had occasion to call upon Him for. He has given us much favour in the eyes of many, and has provided us with a comfortable habitation, which, in His kind providence He allows us to call our own, under Him the Sovereign Lord. Besides, He is calling us this day to magnify His holy name, for distinguishing spiritual mercies of which we have been and still are the daily recipients. He causes His word to be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and makes us and His dear people with us to enjoy much of His life-giving presence in the ordinances of His grace. We praise Him likewise for having added to the church a goodly number of His chosen since we came here.

'Yesterday was indeed a good day to our souls.

My dear husband seemed to enjoy much of the presence of God. May it be to us a pledge of enjoying yet richer communications. Come, dear Lord, and dwell in us and with us while in this world, as a sweet earnest that we shall soon dwell with thee in heaven. It grieves my very soul that I can live so often in estrangement from thee.

‘I would humbly supplicate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all the churches of Jesus Christ throughout the world, and especially on the church with which we are connected. May thy servants, O my God, who are this day to be set apart for filling the office of Deacons in thy church, be full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and have much enlargement of soul in giving themselves to thee and to the service of thy church. Say to us from this day I will bless you.

‘This Sabbath is a silent one, by reason of the continuance of God’s chastening hand, but this is not all, my gracious Father hides his face. I find where God’s presence is enjoyed, there is heaven to my soul. I desire to justify God and

condemn myself. I have neither prized communion with Him as I ought to have done, nor made due preparation for His worship in the more solemn ordinances. Pardon my iniquity for it is great.

‘My dear husband’s labours are not attended with that decisive success which could be wished. We have been hearing this day of the corruption of human nature and its awful consequences as bringing the flood on the old world. I propose this day in dependence on promised grace to join with the Lord’s servant, my husband, in humbling ourselves before our God on account of sin, and also to supplicate his most undeserved mercy and grace. Lord Jesus, build the spiritual temple in my soul and take the glory. Oh ! that I could attain higher degrees of conformity to the ways and will of my God.

‘I have this day been directed to confess the Lord Jesus Christ, and have been instructed as to the manner in which I ought to make this confession with understanding, in faith, openly,

immediately, universally, with self-denial, in the exercise of grace, and in a steady determined manner. I have been attempting self-examination as to these things, and find much cause for humiliation, self-abasement, and godly sorrow in the presence of God. I have nothing in myself but sin and guilt ; but in my altogether lovely Lord there is every thing my soul can need to please my God and come at his enjoyment.

‘I am in deep distress on account of the perplexed situation of some who are dear to us and united with us in the fellowship of the gospel. I have resolved to spend some time in prayer for them, and to unite with them in requesting our covenant-keeping Jehovah to appear for their deliverance. Thou, O God, knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and will not suffer any of thy dear children to be tempted above what they are able to bear. Let the eternal God be their refuge.

‘In the prospect of this day sitting at the Lord’s table, I would attempt self-examination.

Has the grand transition from nature to grace been effected in my soul? Am I a hearty friend or a secret enemy of the glorious bridegroom? I must answer that, once a child of sin and Satan, I am through rich grace become a child of God; of an heir of wrath, I have become an heir of glory; of an enemy, I am become a friend, and if, when I was an enemy, my God reconciled me to Himself by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, may I be assured that I shall be saved by his life. I would enquire as to the daily and prevailing dispositions of soul manifested by me. Do I feel the constraining power of Christ's love? Do I live to God? Do I feel godly sorrow for sin? Does the sincerity of my repentance appear in my full purpose of and daily endeavour after new obedience? In the presence of the heart-searching Jehovah, I must answer all these enquiries in the affirmative. My beloved is mine and I am His, and in His strength I will go to His table. I have been looking over some rules taken out of holy

scripture for the regulation of my temper and conduct and have been humbled in the very dust on the review, while seeing how far short I come in every particular, and in many instances I have acted directly contrary to my Lord's injunctions.

‘This has been a great day of the Son of man to me and I trust to many. God has graciously heard and answered prayer. He prepared my heart and caused his ear to hear. Notwithstanding the deep-felt sense of innate corruption which I yesterday mourned, I went forward to the Lord's table, though righteousness of my own I had none. If such righteousness is the wedding garment required, I had it not, but as I am assured in the glorious gospel, that it is only on account of the righteousness of Immanuel, that Jehovah is pleased to deal with guilty sinners at all. This righteousness is not only held out to me in the tender of the gospel, but upon me also, while I receive it by faith. Lord! I believe, help thou my unbelief.

‘I felt this day much humbled in the forenoon discourse, whilst the agency of Satan was described in leading men away from the truth, by blinding their minds, distracting their attention, and filling them with prejudices of various kinds. I was also deeply affected by hearing what lengths persons might go in attention to all the exercises of a religious profession, and yet fall short at last. May I hear and tremble while I see that Jesus is wounded in the house of His professing friends, lest I should be the next openly to dishonour His dear name.

‘I do not think that any one has seen more of the hand of God than I have done, both in grace and providence ; but my heart is ready to burst with grief and sorrow for the base and ungrateful returns I have made to the God of love. It will be an act of pure grace if ever I be brought back, for I see that I have gone astray. I have with my own hands made these bands with which my spiritual enemies have bound me. I can neither see, mourn over, nor confess sin in

its true light. I have run away from the only true source of happiness to the merely imaginary streams of creature comforts. Oh ! my God, hast thou not graciously said, I will heal thy backslidings and love thee freely !

‘I have resolved to join my dear husband this day in seeking the face of our God, and in united supplications for the gracious communications of His Holy Spirit to our souls, to our family, and to the dear church with which we are immediately connected. I have been cold and formal in my attempts to discharge the duties of the day, and have felt much want of holy contrition. Is there not a cause? Have I not failed in allowing lawful duties of other kinds to jostle out the spirit of prayer and communion with God? Have I not indulged pride and selfishness, and not acted towards others in every respect as I ought to do. I throw myself on God’s mercy for gracious forgiveness, and humbly ask for divine aid, that I may in future act more like a child of God and an heir of glory.

‘A most unexpected trial has overtaken me. At first I thought I could appeal to the heart-searching Jehovah with regard to my innocence in this matter, but on further review both of my heart and life, I found many things with which I have been chargeable, both in the omission of duties, and in the commission of sin, which render the reproaches cast upon me more just than I was willing to acknowledge. I thought of going this morning to clear myself from misrepresentation, but on second thoughts have resolved to leave my cause with my God, and would principally grieve about this, as an expression of the displeasure of my heavenly Father, for when a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. I ask forgiveness of my God for the pride, carnality, and self-sufficiency, which have rendered this rod necessary. As to the person who has sought to injure my reputation, I do solemnly charge myself to seize the first opportunity of relieving her

temporal wants. I do, in dependence on promised grace, resolve to return good for evil.

The subjoined extract from a letter received from her brother, Rev. John Russel, will prepare the reader for the event of his decease, deeply mourned by Mrs. Shirreff, and all who knew that most estimable man. Mr. Russel had been invited to succeed the celebrated Dr. Chalmers as minister of St. John's, Glasgow, and yielding to earnest entreaties, had intimated his intention to accept the responsible position ; but his deeply seated love to his congregation at Muthill, and their intensity of grief and sorrow, in the prospect of losing their beloved pastor, occasioned such agitation of mind—that he found cause to change his original decision, and he writes to Mrs. Shirreff :

“ Had you known the furnace through which I have passed, you would have wondered that I am alive. I got no rest night or day. The whole of my public work was a burden. From this state of mind I am in some measure relieved, but

the effects will long remain with me. My nervous system is quite unhinged. The attacks on my stomach have been frequent and severe, but through mercy I have been enabled to go on. We had a sweet season at our last communion. I preached from Matthew xxviii. 5, and was wonderfully carried through all my work.

“I am happy to hear that the gospel is prospering so much with you, and that Mr. Shirreff is favoured with such tokens of the divine presence—offer him my kind regards, in which Mrs. Russel joins me, and tell him that when I pray for Christians of every denomination, he is especially in my mind. Glad will I be to hear of the revival of true religion among you. There will be but one society in heaven—a society of holy redeemed creatures all closely united to God and to one another—all of one mind and heart, all singing the same new song, all emulous who shall strike the highest note in their hymn of praise to the honour of their dear Lord. May you and I, my dear sister, form a part of that

glorified and blessed society—and may every affliction tend, through grace, to form us for the work and service of heaven.”

A very short time after this letter was written, Mr. Russel entered on that “work and service of heaven,” a true martyr in Christ’s cause—dying from the effects of conflicting feelings and emotions as to the church of God—too intense for the body. After two days’ illness, he passed away from the world in which he had laboured and suffered, to his appointed place among the spirits of the just made perfect.

‘I received,’ says Mrs. Shirreff, ‘by yesterday’s post, the mournful account of my brother’s death. He is now removed from a world of sin and sorrow, to that happy land “where saints immortal reign.” I cannot describe what I have felt. I desire to say it is well, and would cast myself anew on my heavenly Father, and humbly pray that by this afflictive providence I may be brought nearer to Himself, and made more like Him—that when my Lord comes and knocks by

His messenger death, I may arise and open to Him immediately.

‘I would commend the family of my dear deceased brother to Thy care. Oh my God, I ask all those supplies of grace I need to glorify Thee in every part of my conduct towards them and other relations, in Thy holy providence thrown on my immediate care.

‘In my darkest moments my petitions are continued for holiness and grace to honour God. I ask these blessings rather than the removal of any trial, whether arising from the world, or God’s own people. I have such a view of the wisdom, love, and faithfulness of God in all His dispensations towards me, that I can give a hearty amen to all His holy will. Holiness seems to me the great attainment—and any means of securing this, however painful, I would welcome.

‘The Lord has blessed me far beyond others in respect of servants, but instead of showing my gratitude by a holy, meek, patient deportment, I have failed in exercising that charity which

thinketh **no evil**, vaunteth not itself, and is not easily provoked.

‘I have lost much of the sweetness of this holy day by unwatchfulness. Yesterday, instead of preparing for its duties, I spent some time in reading a book, which I had no call to do. I have felt the sad effects in unfitness for the enjoyment of secret worship. I can reap no benefit from religious duties of any kind, without preparation and prayer for the Holy Spirit. I can often guess what kind of Sabbath I shall have by the temper indulged on the previous day.

‘I have this day received the painful intelligence of the sudden and unexpected death of my late brother’s widow. A few weeks ago, when we parted, I was ill, and she in good health—now she is removed by death, and I the poor cumberer am still spared. My God, enable me to hear Thy voice in this rod, take the charge of the dear orphans—direct, protect, and provide for them as their exigencies may require.’

This petition was answered to Mrs. Shirreff’s

satisfaction. The bereaved children were placed under the care of their aunt, Mrs. Wilson of Edinburgh, and had the singular advantage not only of her kind solicitude and domestic management, but of the society of their cousins, one of whom, the late Dr. George Wilson, was equally distinguished by his piety, his literary attainments and writings, and his exertions as a social reformer.

‘God,’ says Mrs. Shirreff, ‘sometimes opens one channel of communication, and immediately shuts it—and then opens another.’ His gracious design in all, seems to be to make me perceive His own dear hand visible in all my matters—and to destroy in my soul this awful tendency to make the creature my rule, aim and end.

‘Yesterday, after enjoying much sweetness in waiting upon God, I went to see some of God’s dear children, and though I sensibly felt both my heart and my mouth opened to speak of divine things—yet, or ever I was aware, I fell into the sin of self-applause, in bringing forth

both myself and my husband in an unbecoming manner. I have paid dearly for my folly and sin in this matter. I do abhor myself on account of this hidden pride of heart. I fear I feel too much delight even in lawful comforts, and have been guilty of neglecting self-denying duties, from a desire not to offend others.

‘I have heard a delightful discourse from Psalm cxix. 121. We were exhorted to holy duties, that we might thereby honour God, obtain personal advantage, and prove the sincerity of our faith. I felt my whole soul fired with a holy ambition to glorify God. I saw an exceeding beauty in holiness, and felt an ardent desire to possess it—but I am much abased in my own eyes on account of wandering thoughts forcing themselves upon me, often in the very time of hearing.

‘In the beginning of my Christian journey John vi. 37, in the hands of the Almighty Spirit, set me on my feet, and through the same blessed influence, those words have often been of signal

service to my soul. I cannot express what views I have lately received of my vileness—often I can scarcely believe that one so unworthy can enter heaven.

‘I heard a precious discourse from Heb. vii. 22, from which I learned that Christ takes the place of his people—pays their debts—and purchases for them an inheritance. That Christ was made a surety, leads us back to the counsel of peace ; that it is a better testament, teaches us that its blessings are heavenly, not earthly, and in extent of duration and influence far superior to the ancient covenant with the seed of Abraham. This testament may be considered as the covenant and oath of God, that, coming to Jesus, all the blessings of grace and of glory hereafter, shall be ours.

‘I am called to erect a new Ebenezer of praise to my prayer-hearing God—for this has been to me a wonderful day of the power of God. The preacher pressing upon each of us the necessity of giving some answer to the free and full call of

the gospel. With my whole soul I replied, what have I to do any more with idols ?

‘ As I intend this day to leave home, with a view to visit our dear people that we left, I would say with Moses, “ If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” ’

After this visit to St. Ninians, she writes :

‘ I never witnessed such proofs of affection and kindness. Wherever I turned, I saw new proofs of the goodness of God. He went before me to prepare my way ; and He also went with me, giving such a sweet sense of His love as made my heart burn with affection to our unseen Lord, and to His dear people for His sake.

‘ This has been a week of peculiar trial. I have often been in great perplexity, not knowing the path of duty. May the Lord grant us in this matter the special guidance of His Holy Spirit.

‘ I enjoyed much in hearing God’s word this day. Humility was described as the fruit of a divine influence, and motives for cultivating this

grace if possessed, and for obtaining it, if destitute of it, were clearly stated.

‘In the time of hearing I saw how desirable and lovely this grace was—and I determined to urge petitions constantly and earnestly for its full attainment. Save me, Lord, from the hidden unmortified pride of my heart, and give me the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

At this time special seasons of prayer were kept with a design to intercede for the salvation of her children, and especially of her son, a medical student—she writes,

‘My husband and I agreed to spend some time to-day in spreading the case of our dear children, and in a particular manner, that of our son William, before the throne.

‘We would, my God, for Jesus’ sake ask that he may be brought under the saving power of the truth. Honour him with honouring Thee—take the charge of directing his temporal matters. I would not prescribe to Thy infinite wisdom, but as the earth is Thine, and the fulness

thereof, I immediately apply to Thee as my reconciled Father, through Jesus, to do that for him which shall be most for Thy glory, and best in every way. Grant my one petition, that all the talents Thou mayest see good to bestow on him may be consecrated to Thy glory, and the promotion of my dear Lord's kingdom.

‘This day is fixed upon for transacting important business in the church. Some people on whom we have heaped expressions of kindness, have given us sore distress. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

‘I never witnessed such a near resemblance to what is recorded of the spirit and acting of the primitive church, as I saw last night in our meeting. Our dear brethren discovered such love and harmony among themselves, as well as meekness, patience, and long-suffering to the individuals who have risen up as troublers in the Church. Ever since I have been enabled to give up the whole matter as to this trouble in our church, to God in prayer, I have found

great peace of mind, and also a return of affection to the very persons who have been the cause of our distress. May God bless each of them, and give them grace to humble themselves in His sight.

Mrs. Shirreff had during this year her maternal solicitude deeply excited by the prospect of parting with her son William, who received from the East Indian Company an appointment to Medical Service in Bengal. She writes :—

‘I am almost overwhelmed with the painful prospect of his going away to a distant land, and that I shall not have it in my power to comfort him, nor to receive comfort from him in person. I have been in such grief at the thought of his departure that I designed to make it one of my petitions this day, that my gracious Lord would interpose for me in this matter, and prevent his going to a foreign land. I have seen in this design my sin, and therefore, in dependence on promised grace, I do give up this my beloved child with all his interests for time and eternity,

to the care of my gracious Father in heaven. I would not prescribe one thing or another, but leave all to His infinite wisdom.

The reader may learn from the following extract of a letter from her son after his arrival in India, what were his feelings as to his mother.

“I cannot write to you without recollections of the most affecting character. That circumstances have obliged me to leave you, to leave one whose every action had bound round my heart cords which no time nor place can rend asunder ; to leave one in whose affection I exultingly hope I have no small share, I certainly must and do consider to be one of the principal trials which, in this life, I may expect to meet. Do, as you value my happiness, alleviate the pains of separation by writing as frequently as opportunity presents. On the voyage of five and a half months, we had dangers by no means few, but still I am preserved, and am now in the very best health.”

‘I enjoyed much,’ says Mrs. Shirreff, ‘yester-

day, in hearing the meat-offering explained in its bearing on believers in Christ. It was stated that nothing of the love of God could reach us but through Christ, and nothing of ours could be acceptable to God, but through the same glorious channel.

‘ Four things made up the meat offering—fine flour, frankincense, oil, and salt.

‘ So God should be served with the fine flour, or the best of our time, talents, and property. It is Christ’s presenting our offerings, and services, and persons which makes them fragrant. There must also be the oil of grace—the Spirit’s anointing—and sincerity and fervour in our offering.

‘ An address was then given to aged Christians, exhorting them to take care not to leave their first love ; if they felt lukewarm or formal, they ought to feel alarmed, and come anew to Christ for light and life and pardon.

‘ I was instructed, comforted, and humbled by hearing these discourses.

‘ In the prospect of remembering the dying love

of my Saviour, I would enter on strict enquiry as to my state and frame of mind.

‘It is written : That there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—my soul, art thou in Christ Jesus, and art thou evidencing that this is the case by the spirituality of thy temper, and the holiness of thy life? I read, To as many as received Him, He gave power or privilege to become the sons of God—my soul, hast thou received Christ, and art thou continuing to rest on Him alone for salvation? My God, Thou knowest that I would rather offend the whole world, than deliberately sin against Thee. Oh that this new representation of the death of the Lord Jesus, may be truly the death of sin in my soul. I desire to mourn on account of my sin in neglecting holy meditation on divine things. I account myself the least of saints, the greatest of sinners. I am not on this account really more humble in my views of myself than others, but this is the difference ; I have more reasons for

humility than others have, on account of the peculiar aggravations that attend my sins.

‘I do also abhor myself, that I have such a vile propensity to think and speak evil of those with whom, in divine Providence, I am called to act. I perceive much want of patience under injuries, great deficiency of meekness and humility, a disposition to lose sight of God, and to look to creatures—practically forgetting that they can do nothing but what they are permitted to do; I have also been strongly tempted to indulge irritability of temper. Though I were as sure of heaven as if already there, this would not satisfy me; my soul thirsts for the high honour of honouring God, and serving my generation according to His will. I cannot bear the thought of living a useless, sensual, selfish life. I desire to live to and be like my God.

‘I feel cause for humiliation, not only on account of my personal and our family sins, but also on account of the judgments of God, which are hanging over this sinful nation and city. We

are threatened with a sore scourge, an infectious pestilential disease (the cholera), is now within a few miles of this city. If it be Thy will, O my God, I pray that this cup of suffering may pass from us. I would plead in the name of Jesus that if any or all of us by means of this disease are to be removed out of the world, that Thou wilt, by Thy rich grace, prepare us for this transition, by enabling us individually to believe and receive the gospel. Oh that there may be a general turning to the Lord—that as a nation and as individuals we may search and try our ways, and turn to Him.

‘I have this evening bitterly to mourn over the dishonour I have done to God by manifesting a very unbecoming temper in the presence of my dear children—and by so doing have laid stumbling blocks in their way.’

In the month of December 1832, Mrs. Shirreff’s mind was most deeply moved by the severe indisposition of her husband.

She writes: ‘My dear husband gets daily

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worse ; Oh my God, fill his heart with Thy love, and his lips with Thy praise. Honour us both by signally honouring Thee in life or death. I have often said, Thou Lord, art dearer to me than any person or thing upon earth. Give me grace to make this manifest in the hour of trial.

‘This has been a week of sore affliction. Wave after wave has gone over my head. It is a bitter cup—but the thought that my dear Lord has mixed all its ingredients, has sweetened even this painful cross. I have seen much of the Lord’s goodness in the alleviation of my dear husband’s trouble, by the calm, cheerful, resigned manner with which he has been enabled to meet the disposing will of God. When my cheeks run down with tears, my heart is filled with joy and thankfulness for the high honour bestowed upon me, in being permitted to minister in the smallest degree to the comfort of the Lord’s honoured servant.

‘Our church is to meet this day for fasting and prayer. It does not seem to be my duty to

join them in these exercises, but I wish in private to spend this morning in similar exercises. My God, if it seem good in Thy sight, send Thy word and heal Thy servant ; but if otherwise determined, give grace to bless a taking as well as a giving God.

‘Yesterday was the anniversary of my marriage, but owing to my great distress, I could not record my feelings on the day. It is now twenty-eight years since the Lord was pleased to connect me with His honoured servant. I desire to praise His holy name for the numberless blessings that have flowed from this union, and now, in the immediate prospect of its speedy termination, I would solemnly give myself up to God as my husband, guide, portion, and all.

‘I am now come into deep waters, where there is no standing. May God be with His dear servant, my husband, while passing through the dark valley ; illuminate it with His sensible presence, and enable the sufferer, through grace,

to leave a testimony to the power, love, and faithfulness of his dear Redeemer.

'December 27th, 1832.—It has pleased my infinitely wise Lord this morning to remove by death my dearest earthly comfort, my precious husband. I desire with Job to say:—"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." The day before his death was not only one of peaceful serenity, but of holy triumph. The Lord grant, that as my day of duty or my day of trial, so my strength may be.'

Mr. Shirreff continued his arduous labours in the ministry of the gospel, until entirely incapacitated by the progress of his malady. For a few weeks before his decease, his relatives witnessed his faith and hope maintaining their ground amidst accumulated infirmities, and the ever nearer approach of death. To one of his children he said, "The gospel is our only resource when we come here. Taking his wife's hand in

his own he said, "You have nobly discharged relative duties to me."

"What shall I do," said Mrs. Shirreff, "if God should take you from me?" He replied, "You have God and your Bible."

When his medical attendant said, "You will soon be in a better world," he soon after clasped his hands together, and said, "O Lord, I thank Thee that this does not give me a painful surprise."

On the day before his death, his face assumed a singularly bright expression, and looking up to the roof of the bed, Mr. Shirreff said, "Who are these? What fine singing!" His wife expressed her surprise on hearing this—but he added, "they are there, what fine singing!"

After this time his words became inarticulate to those around him—he was evidently conscious, and calmly fell asleep in Jesus.

Mr. Shirreff was distinguished by his clear and powerful exposition of divine truth. His attachment to that truth was not only fervent, but

tried. Few ministers of Christ in modern times have made such a sacrifice as he did on leaving St. Ninians. Yet he was accustomed to say that the loss of ample income and of his manse were insignificant, when compared with the agony of tearing himself away from his congregation, many of whom were his spiritual children.

In Glasgow, while as the pastor of a Baptist Church, he experienced much kindness, and a considerable sphere of labour was open before him ; his trials of faith and patience were often severe and painful, but these never led him to express regret in reviewing the course he had taken. In his last illness, addressing his daughter, who at that time did not sympathize with his views and convictions, he said, "take care that you do not be ashamed of the truth ; take care that you be found on the side of truth."

After Mr. Shirreff's death, Rev. James Anderson writes to Mrs. Shirreff from St. Ninians.

"I can assure you, your late worthy husband lives in the grateful remembrance of many a one

in the parish. When they look back to his valuable ministrations with which, in the kind providence of God they were so long favoured, they cannot fully express what their hearts feel. The name of Mr. Shirreff is associated with vital godliness and with fervent zeal, distinguished ability and great success in the discharge of the important duties of the ministerial office, and will never be forgotten, so long as practical piety is to be found among us."

Mrs. Shirreff writing her son in India, says :—

"You know how much I loved your dear father, and yet I was made willing not only cheerfully to resign what I esteemed my best earthly gift, but also to give thanks for the high honour of being allowed to minister in his last moments to such an eminent servant of Jesus.

"Since your father's death my interest in you has rather increased, and I have been crying to my God and Father through Christ, that instead of the father he would take the sons, and honour them both with honouring God and promoting

the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. I especially look to you to take your father's place, both in the family and the world. Could we penetrate the vail which separates the other world, and there behold your now glorified father enjoying the immediate presence and joy of his Lord, and he were now asked what he thought of all he had done and suffered for his dear Redeemer on earth, he would reply, that had he ten thousand lives he would cheerfully sacrifice them to the love, and in the service of his Lord. It is the strength of my affection for you which induces me to dwell on my favourite subject. I wish to be the means of leading you to seek true honour and happiness where they only can be found, in the service of the best of masters, the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Come and see;' put in your claim for a share in His wonderful salvation, and then you, through rich grace, will be made to say, "He is indeed the chief among ten thousands, yea, altogether lovely."

"The Lord has so supported and comforted me

since He was pleased to remove your precious father, that I am a wonder to myself. My chief anxiety, next to living near to God myself, is that my dear children may be partakers of the same grace which shone so brightly in him, and as it was in his heart to hand down to generations yet to come an example of the purity, simplicity, and order of the worship and service of the dear Redeemer; that his sons may be honoured with accomplishing this grand design."

She writes, *May 5th, 1833*:—"May God forgive my undue affection to the memory of my dear husband. He was indeed much beloved and valuable; but it was my infinitely sweeter Lord Jesus who made him so to me. My excessive mourning for him has brought to light some hidden evils which lurk in this wicked heart. I enjoyed much in pouring out my soul before God in prayer. I was filled with admiration, love, and gratitude on viewing the perfections of God as manifest in painful dispensations of His providence. It pleased God, about twenty-four years

ago, to bring me into very deep concern about the salvation of the two children I then had. As this charge increased, my anxiety increased, not only that they might individually choose God in Christ for their Father and Portion, but also be honoured with signally promoting the Redeemer's cause on earth. Many years have since elapsed, but each living day, in comparison of this object as to my children, every other gain is in my view a mere nothing.'

On the fourth of November Mrs. Shirreff states her feelings on occasion of her son, Mr. John Shirreff, leaving her for the purpose of completing his term of study for the legal profession in Edinburgh.

'My dear son has this day left me for the purpose of completing his studies. I have committed him to the care and protection of my heavenly Father. I have seen many changes in passing through the wilderness, but Thou, my Saviour, hast been ever the same; yes, and Thou hast reserved Thy choicest cordials for the dark steps

of my pilgrimage journey. I desire to give thanks for Thy great goodness through every period of my life, and to rejoice in the prospect of resuming the glorious theme in a better world.

‘I have had much enjoyment this day in Ps. lxxiii. 25. I often feel a holy delight in faith’s clasping (as it were) a triune God. I cannot express how His glorious perfections shine forth to my astonished sight. I never had in all my life, before this day, such a clear view how the most unworthy sinner may enter heaven with holy boldness on account of the merits and mediation of our ever living High Priest, and may expect every blessing from God, the Judge of all. May my Saviour become every day more precious to me, until the day of glory dawn, and the shadows of sin and sorrow flee away.

‘I praise my God that, dear as was my husband, He has more than made up the loss by bestowing rich supplies of grace, so that I feel increasing pleasure in His reign and in the properties of His providence. I now view, more

than ever, all events as occurring under the eye and counsel of a loving Father. I esteem it a high honour to be made a comfort to any of God's dear children, and have the superior privilege of giving instead of receiving. May my God enable me to be faithful in improving my talents to His glory, and in anticipation of my responsibility at His tribunal.

‘I desire to humble myself this evening on account of the sins of my tongue. On the slightest provocation, I give way to fretful, peevish, angry words. I have often resolved against this sin, but, before I was aware, have as often fallen into it.’

June 3d, Mrs. Shirreff left Glasgow to spend the summer months at Largs, and while there she writes :—

‘I often tell my God that anything will do with the sweet enjoyment of His favour ; but all the world, if I could possess it, will not suit me without it. With pious Herbert I say

“What have I here that I should stay and groan,
The most of me to heaven is fled ;
My thoughts and joys are all packed up and gone,
And for their old acquaintance plead.”

My desires are daily increasing to obtain the honour of actively glorifying God. I do not remember ever to have attained such enlarged views of the absolute sovereignty of God ; and at the same time have felt horror at my arrogant presumption in attempting to dictate to the great Jehovah who giveth no account of His matters. He graciously permits me to pray and plead for myself and those who are dear to me, but I ought to do so with entire submission to God's will. If He grant these requests, I ought to acknowledge His mercy with humility and gratitude ; but if He see good to deny me, what is the duty of a condemned criminal, pardoned and accepted only by His clemency, but thanksgiving. Yet I see from John xii. 28 that nothing is too great for me to ask, nor for God to give, for the sake of His dear Son.

‘I have enjoyed sweet communion with God this morning. He is, indeed, my all ; my whole soul is fired with love. Yet, deeply humbled that I cannot love Him as I would, I do long to be the instrument of bringing others to His love and service.

‘As I intend to spend this morning in fasting and prayer for the purpose of spreading out the case of the church with which I am connected before God, and also the situation of some of the Lord’s dear children in deep affliction, I ask that the Holy Spirit may be imparted as a spirit of grace and supplication.

‘We have, as a church, sinned as individuals, and in our united capacity we have not improved, nor been thankful as we ought for our high privileges, nor humbled as we ought on their removal. In the name of Jesus I humbly supplicate return to us as a church, give us pastors according to Thy heart ; may Thy image in each of us be more discernible ; a spirit of holiness and love prevail, so that it may be easy for the

Lord's servants to discharge their duty to us. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel : in faith I desire this day to commit to Thy care the flock of Thy dear glorified servant. Graciously raise up others in his place, and bestow on them a double portion of his spirit.

‘I desire to offer up my sacrifice of praise for the Lord's great goodness in these months of painful widowhood. I have found Him to me a never-failing treasury, filled with boundless stores of grace. He is carrying on His work with power in my soul. My eyes are daily opening to the great end of life, and filled with desires to attain it in some measure. I feel also increasing willingness that Jesus should have the whole glory of my salvation. I am truly grateful, also, that my way is made so plain, hedged in by His providence, that I have a heart to pray, and realize answers to prayer. I find that I am brought sensibly nearer to my God, my desires for conformity to His image and entire resignation to His will are increasing. My chief desire

is that self may be completely dethroned, that I may speak only for God, and live only to Him.

‘I praise God, who not only continues but increases my aim to live only to Himself. I can say I seek no glory of men ; but, on the contrary, have done many things merely with a view to check this man-pleasing spirit which has so often proved a snare to me ; and, through grace, I resolve that, though I have known Christ after the flesh, I desire to know Him in the same way no more. I do esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than this world can afford.

‘I purpose to spend some time this day with fasting and praying, supplicating on behalf of Christ’s Church, and especially that the Lord would supply our church with a pastor, and help me to willingly render every service which, in His providence, may be given me to my offending brethren, that I may be honoured with promoting their temporal comforts, but chiefly that their souls may be given me for my hire. I resolve anew to receive the kindness of friends and

the unkindness of enemies as from the hands of my most gracious Father.'

Mrs. Shirreff's prayerful solicitude as to the spiritual welfare and eternal salvation of her children was undying and ardent.

The following extracts from letters to her son in India will express her emotions on this subject:—

"Why does my son never write to me a word about his most important interests—the concerns of his never dying soul? You have never given me any decisive account of your spiritual matters. The account of your temporal prosperity not only rejoices my heart, but is cause of thanksgiving to our good God, the kind Author of all our blessings. But, my dear William, what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? May I therefore hope that, through grace, you will make the pleasing and honouring of God the great business of your life, and especially obey His command of believing in His Son.

Oh, that you knew how much my soul pants after the high honour that I and mine may serve the Lord. Often I look to my God to hear my humble petition, and to grant that instead of the father there may be the children. Do give yourself up unreservedly to the Lord, resolving in the strength of promised grace that if God shall give you a family, you and your house shall serve the Lord."

Mrs. Shirreff had two sons : William Shirreff, to whom the preceding letter was addressed ; and a younger son of great promise ; and who, after a very successful career in the University of Edinburgh in studies appropriate to his profession, began business as a Writer to the Signet in Glasgow with every prospect of a prosperous course.

Singularly amiable and exemplary in discharging relative duties, his general conduct was irreproachable, and more than usually free from the levity and frivolity of many young persons ; but at this time he had given no evidence of those

essential elements of the Christian life—repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. At a subsequent period, when he had begun to know the God of his deceased father, and felt the attraction of Christ's cross, he said, speaking of his character at this period, "I was a proud Pharisee."

It will be no surprise to the reader of the foregoing pages that when this son, in the time of his great promise as to worldly advancement, and when yet a stranger to renewing grace, after severe inflammation of the chest began to manifest symptoms of incipient consumption, the heart of the widowed mother received a fresh wound.

She writes on the 28th September, 1835 :—' I have been prevented from setting down the feelings of my soul in consequence of the continued and increasing indisposition of my dear John. I have got new and humbling views of my own sinfulness and weakness. In my practical judgment I do esteem my God the only satisfying portion of my soul ; yet often is my heart too

much taken up with creature comforts, and I do not trust as I ought to do my infinitely faithful God, who has said as thy day of duty or day of trial so shall thy strength be. I have found Him the faithful God ; the words of the Lord are tried words. He has done me much good by each varying providence. My greatest grief, even when His hand was heavy upon me, arose from the painful reflection that I was not honouring God as I ought, or as I would.

‘I give thanks to my God, that in the riches of His grace I feel that He is not only continuing but sensibly increasing His good work in my soul by every ordinance and every providence ; so that I can truly say Jesus is all my salvation and all my desire. I desire to look to Him as the great ordinance of the Father for my sanctification, as well as my justification. I cannot save myself from the remainder of corruption ; no creature can save me, but one touch of His gracious hand can make me whole. I have been signally comforted from Matt. i. 21.

‘The thought of dishonouring God in any matter is worse than ten deaths to me. What I am most afraid of is, that through ignorance or selfishness I may, in any instance, mistake the path of duty and be permitted to go astray on forbidden ground.

‘I never recollect, on any former occasion, being so deeply humbled on account of natural depravity, and its actual expression as I have been this morning. I felt much abasement of soul, and was enabled with eagerness and gratitude to plead the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus. I ardently desired to have my will sunk in God’s will. I saw His character to be perfect wisdom and unchanging love, and therefore all His dispensations must be gracious and wise, whatever their outward aspect may appear to be. It is my duty and privilege not only to believe this, but to manifest my belief in all my words and deportment.

‘I have lived fifty-three years in the world but to little purpose. I want to feel meekness,

humility, patience, gentleness, charity in more lively exercise, and I would this day supplicate on behalf of my dear son John, still in affliction. My God, if it seem good in thy sight, direct to the use of means which thou wilt bless for restoring him to health and usefulness, but whatever thou dost with regard to his body, sanctify and save his precious soul.

‘My dear son is decidedly worse, and it has been thought advisable that he should be sent off immediately to a foreign land. O God, enable me in this hour of trial to manifest a temper and deportment that will declare that Thou art my all, and dearer to me than the dearest things in heaven or earth. Many friends are raised up to express great kindness in this time of affliction, and are willing to do all in their power to alleviate its pressure, and I am comforted and supported beyond all I could have expected.

‘As we intend, God willing, to accompany my dear John this day to the ship, I have spent some time in meditation and prayer.

I would enter into the chambers my God has provided for me ; I would, by faith, take the security of His perfect wisdom, of His unchangeable love, His infinite power, His eternal faithfulness. I desire to justify God and condemn myself, for I have greatly sinned in every relation, but through the propitiation He has provided, I lay myself at the feet of my offended Father. I will, through grace, kiss the rod and bless the hand that smites. I will avail myself of my high privilege, and leave all my fatherless children, and especially my dear John, under his afflicting hand, with my reconciled Father through Jesus. I charge my soul to recollect that the winds and the waves obey His voice.'

Mr. John Shirreff, to whom the preceding paragraphs refer, at this time left Glasgow for Jamaica. After remaining there for some time, he visited Demerara and Barbadoes, and then returned to Kingston in the island of Jamaica. In this town he experienced great kindness from Mr. Wemyss Anderson, a solicitor, to whom he

had a letter of introduction, which, however, he had not presented, when Mr. W. A. seeing a young gentleman in his place of worship, looking pale and ill, introduced himself to him, took him to his house, and insisted on his remaining as his guest. The invalid availed himself of the kind offer for a few weeks, until a vessel should sail for England. It was during this visit that Mr. John Shirreff met with that wonderfully heart-searching book, "Alliene's Alarm to the Unconverted." He took the greater interest in this work as Mrs. Anderson was a relative of the writer, and as he witnessed in her family living examples of godliness. The Holy Spirit so effectually opened his heart to receive the truths explained and enforced in that good book, that he became a new creature—a penitent sinner believing in Christ, and avowed his faith by the celebration of divine ordinances, and union with the church of Christ. It was, as the reader will have observed, the habitual practice of Mrs. Shirreff, to intercede most fervently for the salvation of her children,

and just before the arrival of the intelligence that her son John had experienced this happy change, she said to her daughter, "I have been in agony about your brother John. I would give him up if satisfied of his conversion to God. I have asked the prayers of all my friends for him but I could get no rest. I am now looking away from all my friends. I have now cast his case over into the hands of the great Intercessor."

That same week a letter arrived from Mr. J. Shirreff to his sister in which he wrote, "Tell my mother what I know will give her pleasure, that I begin to know the God of my father. Many of his instructions I have forgotten, but his holy consistent life has made an impression on me never to be effaced.

"I have given myself unreservedly to Christ, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding has not been denied."

December 27, 1836, Mrs. Shirreff writes to her son in India :—

"MY DEAR WILLIAM—This has been indeed a

year of great affliction, but also a year of the right hand of the Most High. Think of your sister, brother, and yourself, at the same time in affliction and all absent from me. I cannot express what I felt, on being not only permitted, but commanded to leave you individually, with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and my own reconciled Father through Him. I often think I am more bound from mere gratitude to love and honour God than any other—He has done and is daily doing such great things for me. When I read your answers to my enquiries, I felt sorry that I had not in a more wise, humble, and spiritual manner, communicated to you my great anxiety about the welfare of your immortal soul. Be assured that I do not wish more than yourself, for a hypocritical mask of piety, a long face or high sounding talk of religion, but what I most earnestly desire for myself and my dear children, is that we may have our hearts and affections so concentrated in God, that we shall count it not only our duty and interest, but our highest hon-

our and greatest privilege to devote our every talent to His glory and service, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. I am happy to learn that you are in good terms with the Episcopal minister. If he truly fears God he may be of use to you. But I hope you will search the word of God with prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, before you join yourself to any particular church. You had signal advantages on receiving the instructions and witnessing the example of your ever dear and much honoured father. How will it accent his song of praise through all eternity, that ever he was honoured with doing or suffering anything for Christ. My dear son, be assured whatever Satan, the world, or our wicked hearts may tempt us to think, to be engaged in serving the Lord is our greatest happiness and will be our highest honour. I have often wished that I could so proclaim the Lord's great goodness as to be the instrument of making others come and taste how good He is."

The following is an extract from a letter from Mr. John Shirreff, during his residence in the West Indies.

“ I am now free from fever, and am recovering my strength, but very slowly. I have still some doubts of the possibility of my constitution rallying in the face of such a debilitating disease. I still expect to see you in summer. I think my constitution may wear out for a few months longer. Ultimate recovery, I candidly tell you, is now quite beyond my expectation. I must be an invalid for life. I enjoy as excellent spirits as I could enjoy, when separated from home and those there. Indeed, very often I am almost happy. Those around me show something like a mother's care; in short, they are the best hearted people I have yet met with since I left home.”

To her son in India Mrs. Shirreff writes :—

“ We were in great anxiety of mind about you as well as John, not having received any letters from you for some months, but were much relieved by your last, in which, however, you men-

tion having had a relapse of fever in consequence of exposure to the sun. After my first emotions of delight on hearing from you, painful anxiety again took possession of this breast, and I long exceedingly for further accounts of the state of your health. I know well what your affectionate heart must have endured when you received the intelligence of your brother's illness. I have been ready at times to fear its pernicious effects, both on your health and spirits. Where can I look or on whom can I lean for support but my own faithful God, my kind gracious Father who condescends to say, leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive. In the riches of His grace, He disposes and enables me to attempt the discharge of my duty, and the enjoyment of my high privilege in this matter.

“May I request of you as a particular favour to myself not only to use every means for restoring and preserving health, but likewise to be cautious as to unnecessary exposure to any kind of danger. I am not able to express what I have seen

of God's goodness in raising up so many kind friends in our late affliction. Every one seems more anxious than another to add in any way to our comfort, and to lessen our grief.

"I have come to know that I must not expect anything from creatures, but as channels of conveyance which my gracious Father chooses for conveying the expressions of His goodness to me. I have naturally so much pride and carnality that I perceive the absolute necessity of being humbled, and I find these trials in the hand of the Spirit, make me see and feel what a poor empty nothing I am, and thus I am quickened in my application for needful grace, and also made more truly thankful for that full and free salvation which is in Christ Jesus. I seem to myself a poor beggar who receives with a glad and thankful heart, the kind and seasonable assistance held out to him. I find every new conflict with corruption within, and temptation without, endears the Lord Jesus to my soul.

"I am thine, O Lord, by gift, purpose, purchase,

and conquest, and thou art mine by free deliberate choice, at all hazards.

“Yesterday I heard a precious lecture on the 23d Psalm. This so exactly suited my case that when the discourse was finished, I gave it in a solemn manner to the Holy Spirit, to keep it for me and to bring it back with new life, light, and power to my soul. I have learnt that the privileges contained in this Psalm, ought to excite in me lively gratitude, firm confidence and holy joy in God in whatever circumstances I may be placed. For many years past, the comforts of this life have been greatly enhanced to me by my conscious ability to receive them as coming immediately from God, and to enjoy them with a sense of His love as my reconciled Father through Jesus. I have often felt the edge taken off my sharpest trials when I saw the hand of my loving Father, and with humility and fervent love have been brought to kiss the rod and to bless the dear hand that sent it. My God is the chief delight of my soul. In these days of painful

widowhood, what ravishing discoveries have I received of His nature and glorious perfections.

“I feel a decided change in my mind as to my children so deservedly dear to me. Whilst my husband lived I was accustomed often to ask him to unite with me in prayer on their behalf, and since his death I have often made the same request to my praying friends, and though I still value such intercessors as means appointed by God for bringing down the blessings sought, I have been decidedly led even in this matter from the small streams to the overflowing fountain. Often in the course of the day I apply as directly and confidently to my gracious Saviour, as did the dying thief on the cross, and I am fully persuaded that a single remembrance from Him is sufficient. On His love, power, and grace I rest, and am greatly comforted in so doing. If He graciously condescends to answer my requests I will praise Him ; but if He should say I have no delight in thee, neither will I give the desire of

thy heart, I desire to say, here am I, let Him do as seemeth Him good.

“I feel often deeply humbled on account of the strength of what is evil in me, and the weakness of grace. Thinking of my sin, I go on saying, infinite upon infinite. I cannot believe that any of God’s children had such reason as I have to mourn for sin. My consolation is in this, Christ saves to the uttermost of guilt, sinfulness, and misery, and I do feel His precious love operating in me as an overflowing flood which I am unable to resist. Yet such is my sense of innate depravity that I am kept in constant fear of being led in any instance to dishonour the God I love. Change who will in their love to me, or in its various expressions, I am persuaded that neither life nor death, things present nor things to come shall ever be able to separate me from the love of God, which freely flows to me through Christ Jesus my Lord.

“I have this morning been engaged in prayer and praise on account of my dear son

John, who, if still alive, has this day completed his twenty-third year. I would give thanks to my God for all the comfort I have enjoyed in him, and for the great kindness I have received from him. I would be grateful for all the consolation afforded me under his long and painful illness. Notwithstanding strong natural affection, I have generally felt the love of God and cheerful resignation to His disposing will predominating in my soul, as well as unshaken confidence in His wisdom, goodness, and faithful care. I would give thanks, that God, by bringing him into the wilderness of trouble, has spoken to his heart. It is thy work, oh my God, to convince and to convert, to give a new life and create a new heart. Make this the beginning of years to my dear child in respect of the bright manifestations of Thy grace to his soul."

At this very time, it subsequently appeared by letters received from her son, he experienced that great and blessed change of heart for which she so fervently prayed.

‘The same love,’ says Mrs. Shirreff, ‘which led my Saviour to the cross, directs all His dispensations to me. Every other love is now to me tasteless and insipid.

‘Having for many months heard nothing from my dear sons now in distant lands, I am in deep distress. I bitterly mourn on account of the rising of a disposition to repine, and would now confess the improper temper I have manifested under the kind chastisement of my heavenly Father.

‘My God has been pleased to pour out upon me, in a very remarkable manner, a spirit of love and prayer both for my friends and my enemies. I have often found it difficult to restrain, in their presence, the ardent affection which constantly glowed in my heart, especially with regard to their eternal interests. Yet I see that I have been sometimes imprudent, in giving expression to such emotions of which I ought to have spoken without reserve only to tried friends. I most ardently desire that the love of God and men may fill my whole soul. I resolve to set a double

watch on my tongue even in spiritual matters, and from this time to speak more by my actions than by my words.

‘I have obtained a view of God’s gracious designs, with respect to some painful events in Providence with which I have been visited. I think it will be advisable for me, besides the daily scrutiny of my heart and life, of my principles and practices, to call myself to an account at the end or beginning of every week as to what visible progress I have made.

‘I am called this day to give special thanks for the many alleviating circumstances which have attended the long continued affliction of my dear son John, and especially, that in a distant land my God has made Himself known to him as the God of salvation. I would practically believe that each various event in providence cometh forth from Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.’

Mrs. Shirreff, in anticipation of meeting her son John on his return from Jamaica, says:—

‘I am called to go to a strange place to meet with my dear John on his return to this country. I do rejoice that I cannot go where God is not, and though a poor weak creature in myself, in my Lord Jesus is an abundant supply. I desire to live on God as my all for time and eternity. I pray that I may honour Him in every place, company, and situation. Goodness and mercy have followed me in every step of this painful journey. My dear John has reached this place in safety, and in a sweet state of mind, though his bodily indisposition still remains.’

It was a great source of joy to Mrs. Shirreff to meet again her son, now not hers alone, but the Lord’s, and in sympathy with herself, in love and devotedness to their common Saviour. During that summer and autumn he remained with his family, giving most delightful evidence of a soul regenerate and in a high degree spiritual and heavenly. A friend who knew him well and intimately, says:—“I have never seen any one whose affections were more entirely and unfeign-

edly absorbed in the love of divine things." The Bible and Newton's *Cardiphonia*, were his favourite books.

He lived and walked in every sense as on the verge of the eternal world, with his loins girt, his lamp burning. Riding one day with his sister, who had a most perilous fall from her pony, after ascertaining that she had not suffered severely, he said—"Mary, if this accident had ended in death, would you have been prepared?" On her making no reply, he said—"Well, if it had happened to me, I should have said I am ready. We should always be ready to die at any moment."

As the state of Mr. John Shirreff's health was extremely precarious, on the approach of winter it was deemed advisable that he should visit a warmer climate. On various accounts, and especially as affording an opportunity of seeing his brother William, he determined on a voyage to India, and to this Mrs. Shirreff refers when she writes.

‘This day we intend to accompany our dear John in his journey to the ship sailing for India. My God, the winds and waves obey Thy voice. Waft him in safety to the place whither he desires to go, enable him to live to thee, and when called to leave this vain and sinful world, may he sweetly fall asleep in Jesus, in the assured hope of a glorious resurrection.’

Mrs. Shirreff, accompanied by her daughter, attended the invalid to London and Portsmouth. “To see my brother,” he said, “is my only earthly wish, and when parting from his beloved relatives, whom he was never more to see in this world, he said, “Let us meet at the right hand of God.” To one of them after this parting, he wrote saying, “Before my conversion I was thought very happy, and I was happy ; but since I knew God my happiness has been much greater ; indeed, I would not give one month of my present happiness for years of my former life.” This was said when he was a daily sufferer, and conscious of the

blighting of all his earthly prospects, in the morning of life.'

After this journey with her son, Mrs. Shirreff returned to Glasgow, taking Bath, Bristol, and Dublin in her way. At the first named place she lodged with a Jewess, who was extremely kind, and to whom, after expressing her gratitude, Mrs. Shirreff said, "allow me to leave one word with you. There is no other name in heaven or earth by which we can be saved but the name of the Lord Jesus." This name, however excited great aversion, and manifest dislike in her mind, but she speedily resumed her wonted manner, and gave fresh proofs of her regard.

Mrs. Shirreff encountered, in common with her fellow-passengers and the crew, a very severe storm in the channel, on her voyage to Dublin, but after arriving at home in safety, she writes :—

'My daughter and myself are now returned in safety, after having conducted our dear John to the ship. It is impossible for me to express what

visible manifestations we have had of God's goodness."

'Dunoon, 24th Sept. 1837. I have heard a discourse from 1 Timothy i. 15. The word came home with power to my soul. I saw myself to be the chief of sinners, and whilst the gospel call was given I did anew receive the Lord Jesus as my only Saviour. I feel deeply humbled on account of my impatience under small provocations. I resolve to seek out more carefully my constitutional sins, and to humble myself before God on their account, and to make use of the appointed remedy for their pardon and removal.

'My God, thou knowest that this day, in the sincerity of my heart I have renewed my engagement to be wholly Thine. Write Thy law in my heart that I may never depart from Thee. I find that every ordinance and every providence brings me nearer to my God. The head of the serpent is indeed bruised in my experience.'

Mr. John Shirreff arrived in Calcutta before

the close of the year 1837, and writes to his mother.

“ William is marching down with his own regiment to Calcutta, and expected to have been here as soon as myself, but I got the start of him, not, however, of his letters, for he had written to his agents to get me lodgings, and any money I might require. I expect William in about a month, and *may* live to see him. My mind is in a delightful state, resigned and composed, relying entirely on a reconciled Father through Christ. Thank God with me and for me for His mercy. May God bless my most kind, dearest, and most affectionate of mothers and sisters.

“ Those *months* I spent with you during the summer were worth any *ten* of the *years* of my former life. Indeed, I think that providence in the anticipation of shortening my life in years, has been pleased to let me have the *concentrated* happiness of a much longer life. When I left England, the pangs of parting with nearly all on earth that was near or dear to me was certainly

painful, but I had learned that which can carry happiness wherever it goes, I mean a mind at ease. I felt pleased, and for the most part contented with everything and everybody on board ship—and everybody seemed disposed to be kind to me. The goodness of God was very remarkable in raising up friends out of strangers.”

On the *6th March* 1838, he writes:—“ I am quite puzzled, now that I have sat down to write to you, what to say. Not to tell you how I am would be too bad. But if I don’t know myself, of course you will not blame me ; all I know is that I did not believe the world capable of offering so many reasons of its own kind for remaining a little longer in it, than for the last few months it has afforded me here. Independent of the comfort, the peace, and tranquillity of mind, and the happiness that the Christian religion never fails to afford to its serious and humble followers, I have found a brother, able as well as willing to provide everything to make one comfortable and happy. Higher and better motives

I hope, lead me to complete resignation to the will of providence, as to the duration of my life here ; but certainly that most kind providence has smoothed the way for making a longer life, than I could have anticipated, not only endurable but pleasant.

In July, Mr. W. Shirreff says, as to his brother, "It is beautiful to see the operation of true religion on a manly intelligent spirit like his ; no cant, but a humble faith and earnest reliance on his God, a confidence which enables him to receive the rod without a murmur, and even with gratitude for the fatherly kindness shown him by the infliction of it. When not in his room he is so quiet that seldom could it be known that an invalid is in the house. Would that when my turn comes, I may profit by such an example. John says, that he has lost for himself all interest in this world."

Mr. John Shirreff died on the 10th of October. His brother writes.—"He died quite calmly, and without experiencing many painful incidents,

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which often attend or precede death by pulmonary disease. He felt weaker in the morning when I left him to attend my ordinary duties. On my return I noticed a considerable change. He said to me, 'I believe it is coming at last, but I have been so often disappointed that I cannot *hope* so strongly as I have done several times before.' He called me a few minutes after this to raise him in his bed. I did so, an abscess in the lungs burst at the moment. He pressed my arm tenderly and breathed his last. Farewell, my dear, Oh very dear brother! It will comfort you to hear that for me the bitterness of his death had long been passed, as I had, for months before, looked for it as possible any day. His funeral was attended by all the officers of my troop, and by many others in Dum Dum. All who knew him liked him. His most intimate friend was Captain F. of the artillery, a religious and exemplary young man. For the last four months he came every morning after parade, and joining him in worship remained usually for half an hour.

The Episcopal Clergyman visited him regularly three times a week. John knew the probability of my being ordered away from this place on service, and quietly said, 'Do not trouble yourself about arranging a house for me, God will do every thing before you are called away.' Three days after this conversation he required none of my care.

"The chaplain preached a beautiful sermon on occasion of John's decease from 1 Thess. iv. 14. These words expressing *what he desired*, 'to sleep in Jesus;' *his preparation* for this sleep, by humbly believing that Jesus died and rose again; and *the delightful prospect* which his faith gave him, assuring him that God would bring him with Jesus.

"The clergyman was deeply affected himself, and so were many in the congregation, who knew that all he said of dear John was true. They knew his faith, his patience, and the delight with which the approach of death used to fill him. He often told me, if such were the will of God, he

wished to die suddenly ; and his death was as he wished, I never saw so easy a death."

In the summer of this, the last year of her son's life, Mrs. Shirreff left Glasgow, and in anticipation of her journey to Largs, she writes :—

'I desire to turn away my eyes from my sinful self to my great High Priest. I would by faith view Him as standing and pleading the cause of His people on earth. I put all my petitions into His hands and especially my prayer for the presence and blessing of God in the place whither I intend going to reside for some months. I desire disposition and ability to honour my God, and that whatever favour I may find in the eyes of my fellow creatures, I may improve it for God's glory. With such favours I can joyfully go on in the journey of life. It is worse than death to me in any instance to dishonour God.

'I was thrown into a most fearful state of mind yesterday, by hearing, that though my dear John was still alive, he was very weak. I could not sleep, I felt as if I suffered with him, but the

recollection of what I said to him before we parted helped to compose my mind. I told him that he was now going into better hands than mine, that I had committed him to my faithful God, and that I knew *He* would take care of him. Has *He* not done so? In the exceeding riches of His grace, He has given me solid reason for hope, that though this my dear child has been made to pass under the rod, he has been brought within the bonds of the covenant. What would I desire more, either for myself or for my dear children, than that they should be in the hands and entirely at the disposal of our gracious Father through Jesus. My duty, my interest, my high privilege, is at all times and in all circumstances to say: It is well.

‘I heard a discourse this afternoon from Phil. i. 27, describing some prominent features of a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ. Such a conversation was humble, watchful, marked also by confidence in God as a Father, heavenly, cheerful, benevolent. Motives were presented to

urge us to such a conversation. That it would prove to others and to ourselves the sincerity of our faith, and the security of our hope. It would put honour on the Lord Jesus, and tend to the peace of our own souls.

‘I am not allowed to give way to anxiety as to the future. Whatever pleases God ought to please me, and in the strength of promised grace it shall do so. My very heaven on earth is to know, obey, and submit to the holy, wise, and good will of my gracious Father.

‘This being the birth-day of my beloved John, I purpose to keep some time for thanksgiving on his account. I would give thanks that he has been brought to know, love, and serve the God of his Father, that he was led in a foreign land to unite himself with the dear people of God, and openly to profess his faith in and love to his precious Saviour. I praise my God for inspiring him with a delightful hope of the perfect service and enjoyment of heaven. What am I, Lord, or what is my Father’s house, that such grace should

be shown to one so unworthy as to be honoured with being the mother of an heir of everlasting glory.

‘I have been attempting, in keeping a fast this day, to search out my besetting sins of pride, guile, and covetousness. These I desire to confess and forsake. I would also mourn over my uncharitable temper ; that I find it not only difficult, but impossible, without new and decisive supplies of grace, truly to forgive injuries. I would ask, in the name of Jesus, forgiveness on behalf of the individuals who have been allowed to grieve and vex me in no common way. On this, the last day of the year, I would also confess with shame and grief what seems to lie most heavily on my conscience as the chief sin of the year, a want of savoury humble conversation with persons I have met. I often think of myself as being the very opposite of what is described in 1 Timothy iv. 12.’

During the summer of 1839, Mrs. Shirreff, finding that her health was considerably impaired, deemed it necessary to leave Glasgow for the

benefit of sea air. The death of her son removed all inducement to remain in that city on his account, and she determined to look out for a suitable residence, where, in addition to other advantages, she could worship with Christian friends holding similar views of the ordinances of the gospel and of the nature of the Redeemer's kingdom. For some time she was unable to decide as to the place where she ought to fix her tent ; but at length, finding singular advantage from a temporary stay at Rothesay in the isle of Bute, she removed there.

During the same year, she was greatly interested to find that her son, Mr. W. Shirreff, was deeply impressed on the subject of personal salvation. Like many others in similar circumstances, he had great perplexities, and writing to his mother, he says :—" I throw myself on the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, but I feel that I do not do so in fact, doubts spring up in my mind when I pray, and at times I feel wretched. Possibly God is making me taste



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ROTHSAY,
ARDBRECH CHAPEL IN THE DISTANCE.



of sorrow, in order to teach me to better purpose the marvellous comforts of the gospel. I shall endeavour not to quench the Spirit by any known sin, and if I backslide I shall pray for God's forgiveness. My place is to cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

RESIDENCE IN ROTHESAY.

Writing to a friend in Edinburgh, Mrs. Shirreff says :—

‘I have been advised to reside on the sea coast. I not only wish to adhere firmly to the views on the ordinance of baptism which I have espoused, but, if possible, to enjoy the preaching of the gospel in power and purity, with a pastor *wholly devoted* to the work. I consider the maintenance of the preaching of the gospel not only a privilege but a duty enjoined on the disciples of Christ, that they may, thereby, and in the use of other means, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour.

‘I experience,’ she writes, ‘a comparative want of the spirit of prayer, and am often unable to express my desires, either for myself or others in words. I often go to my dearest Lord and ask Him to teach me to pray, and find great comfort

in such seasons from the form of prayer which, when on earth, He taught His disciples. In the several petitions taken in connection with its preface and conclusion, my soul has indeed found a rich feast, and been able to add a hearty amen.

‘I sincerely love the guileless spirit of the Gospel, and desire more and more to manifest simplicity and godly sincerity; but I am deeply humbled on account of my unthankful temper. I do not think that the common feeling or expression of gratitude is what becomes me, but something more. I have had much forgiven, and therefore ought to love much. I sincerely desire to mortify vile wicked self. I pray that as my Saviour conquered self for me, that by His grace He will enable me to conquer it also.’

On the 8th October 1840 Mrs. Shirreff writes: ‘I have received the mournful intelligence that my beloved son William departed this life on the 9th of July. His end was peace; he died confessing his faith in the Lord Jesus his Saviour. My God, be with me to support, and comfort,

sanctify, and bless ; and enable me to honour thee by cheerful resignation to thy disposing will. My Father God, I do from my inmost soul justify thee in all thy proceedings towards me ; Thou doest all things well, and in this stroke, so unpleasing to flesh and blood, peculiarly well. What am I, or what is my father's house, that thou shouldest this day have given me such cause for solid joy amidst heartfelt sorrow ? I will praise thee though from the depths of self-abasement, that thou hast been pleased, in the exceeding riches of thy grace, to call my dear son from native darkness into thy marvellous light, I must and will praise my faithful God, who has condescended to give His unworthy, sinful handmaid scriptural evidence that her beloved son has joined the general assembly and church of the first-born, and the innumerable company who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. I can find my soul cleaving to God in all circumstances ; I want more and

more conformity to His image, and entire resignation to His disposing will.

‘On this day eight years it pleased the infinitely wise and gracious Jehovah to remove by death my much loved husband. Since that time I have been accustomed to offer thanksgiving on the anniversary to the Lord for the wonders He hath wrought on my behalf. I am brought under additional obligations to praise and magnify the name of the Most High God, who has more than made up that endeared relation in the immediate enjoyment of Himself, and though I am called to mourn the loss of two beloved sons, yet I sorrow not as those that have no hope.’

Writing to a friend respecting the decease of her son, she says, ‘The chaplain of the station writes me that soon after his dear brother’s death he evidently experienced that saving change of which the Saviour so beautifully speaks in the third chapter of St. John’s gospel. The effects of the change became gradually visible as God by His Holy Spirit vouchsafed Him light and

life. He certainly acted up to the light which had beamed on his soul, and he shewed that his profession of Christianity was indeed life in the Redeemer. He adds, "that his end was peace, and that his dying testimony to the truth of Christianity and the value of the Saviour was full and satisfactory. My dear William, about two minutes before his death, desired Mrs. W—— to tell his beloved mother that he died a sincere believer in his Saviour Christ." God has taken from me by death a much beloved and only son, but He has given me Himself as my soul-enriching portion for time and eternity. I will therefore sing, "God lives, blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted." My son was only a few days ill of fever.'

Hearing of the birth of her grandson in India, a short time after the decease of his father, she writes, 'As far as I have any connection with this dear child, I do make a solemn surrender of him to the service and glory of my triune God. May He in the exceeding riches of His grace

form him for Himself, that in the sphere appointed him in the world he may be honoured with shewing forth God's praise.'

After her removal to Rothesay, she writes, 'I desire to make a solemn dedication to my God of those talents with which He has entrusted me, whether of time, money, influence, friends, all, O Lord, is thy own. I desire to rest my eternal all on thy own words of rich grace, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever. I will put my fear in your hearts, and ye shall not depart from me. I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands." Lord Jesus, I am thine, I will be thine. Entreat me not to leave thee, where thou goest I will go, thy people shall be my people, their God shall be my God, and not even death shall be able to part thee and me. I have been hearing a discourse on these words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." We were told two things were requisite for this faithfulness--the grace of God, and faith.

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The peculiar characteristic is perseverance. We should manifest this faithfulness in looking to Jesus, in fighting the good fight of faith, in endeavouring to advance God's cause in the world, and in continuing to do these things until death.

‘Christ has provided and purchased a crown of life and will bestow it. This crown may signify conformity to the image of God, admission to the full enjoyment of Him through eternity, reception with peculiar honour at the day of judgment, and being dignified with power, made kings and priests unto God and the Lamb.

‘I try often to press on my soul that I have only one object for which I should live,—the service and glory of God. I must say I find Jesus very precious to me. I often hide my sin and shame in the wounds of the Christ of God.’

At the close of the year she writes, ‘I give thanks for signal mercies of this last year. I have enjoyed near communion with God in secret and public ordinances. I have received special answers to prayer. I enjoy sweet com-

munion with God's dear children in this place. I hear His word faithfully preached.'

After hearing a discourse on Revelation iii. 7, she writes, 'I cannot express what I felt when I heard my Saviour exalted and set forth for what He is in Himself, and on account of His long-suffering patience towards His redeemed people. The very experience of my soul was stated. Jesus has not only opened my heart for His own reception, but often still passes when the doors are shut and says, "Peace be unto thee." I have heard also a discourse from Psalm xc. 10. The character of those who make God their dwelling-place was stated. They were reconciled to God; they adhered to Him through Christ as their abiding portion. God was the home of their affections. The minister described this dwelling-place as a safe refuge from our enemies, an excellent refuge and an honourable abiding' refuge. He also told us that as He was so in all generations, He would be found such to His people under all changes in their social relations, and

varied dispensations of providence, as well as in death and through eternity. When the glorious truth was stated that God dwelt in His people by His Spirit, and they dwelt in God, I consciously knew this to be the case. I felt God indeed to be the home of my affections. When the question was put: Has God got your hearts? I could appeal to His omniscience that He had mine, and I did in His house again solemnly give it to Him, resolving to welcome every pain, reproach, and contempt that may arise for the love I bear His blessed name, or from the fear of offending my most gracious Lord.

‘I heard from a discourse on Revelation iii. 18, that a deep conviction of blindness and ignorance was not only felt in conversion, but was often greatly increased after further advancement in the Christian course,—this went to my very heart as a fact I had experienced.

‘I long for the time when Jesus as the crowned King of my soul shall bring every thought into captivity to His own will. I want more love to

God, more love to His holy law. I want to seek and find more than ever all my happiness in God, my God, through Christ. I desire to feel more hatred to sin, all sin, the least as well as the greatest, and also would desire more love to the children of God, whether they treat me with kindness or otherwise. I want grace to love my dear friends in God, and to love those who treat me with unkindness, for *His* sake.

‘I have enjoyed much peace this morning in attempting to cleave to God as my all in whatever outward circumstances I may be placed. I have felt more than usual resignation to the divine will, as to the result of prayer. He has in the exceeding riches of His grace condescended to make His glory so precious in my eyes that I would not ask even the answer of prayer, if it should be more for His glory that I be denied.

‘I would anew seize the present opportunity of solemnly giving myself up to the service and glory of God. This I do purpose in dependence on the strength and grace of my beloved Saviour,

and henceforth I will no longer look willingly on either time, influence, money, health, friends, and other things, as given me for myself, but that I may have opportunity thereby of honouring God in their enjoyment and improvement for eternity. I further resolve not to yield to the insinuations of my spiritual enemies when attempting to discourage me from self-denying duties on account of my want both of gifts and grace for their discharge ; but on the contrary, I would use the fulness of the Saviour for what I need—and as I have greatly sinned of late, in neglecting to cultivate a meek and quiet spirit, and in endeavouring, as to matters of indifference, to become all things to all men, in order that I may gain some, I would importunately pray that the exhortation in Philippians iv. 8, may be exemplified by me.

‘ I have been deeply melted with an occurrence in divine providence, which has brought to light the latent pride of my heart. A person having come to see me, in whose temporal and spiritual interests I felt a deep concern, and whose sorrows

I have often made my own—was so changed in her manner towards me, that she reproached me that I did not let my light shine before others, by laying out my resources according as the Lord had given me, for promoting His dear cause in the world. I think I could bear to be esteemed more vile still, if only my dear Lord would take charge of His own glory. He who knows all things, knows that in dependence on His grace I would willingly sacrifice ease, profit, or honour at His call.

‘I have had a sore conflict with my spiritual enemies. I feel so much discouraged on account of the strength of innate depravity, that I am often at the point of saying, surely I shall one day perish by my invisible enemies. Lord Jesus! hold up my goings in Thy good paths, that my footsteps slide not. Oh my glorious Captain, come to the field of battle, thou seest that my power is gone. Hast thou not brought me out of their hands? Allow me not to become their willing prey.

‘I have been in depths, but my gracious Lord has Himself drawn me out, and put a new song of praise in my mouth. O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness.

‘This day I purposed to spend in humbling myself before God on account of innate depravity and its actual expression in my life, as also in acts of supplication for those communications of grace which I so much need ; but oh, what dreadful buffetings from Satan have I this day experienced ; the sense of my sinfulness became quite overwhelming. My mind was filled with thoughts tending to distract and hinder me in the prosecution of the work I had undertaken. At last I was enabled to present my petitions under the covert of the Redeemer’s blood. I presented my diseased leprous soul before my compassionate Saviour, knowing, that if He only would speak the word I should be healed, I find it one of the most difficult things to live simply on Christ, for daily grace to discharge duty, resist temptation and bear up under trial. I often fall

down before my Lord, with the woman of Canaan's words in my mouth, "Lord, help me."

'The Lord has in rich grace brought me to a most pleasant state of mind, and wonderfully subdued both the pride of my heart and the rebellion of my perverse will. I truly desire to be pleased with every providence, because it pleases God. I felt often sweet breathings of soul after my beloved Saviour. I could not bear the thought of allowing any person or thing to have that place in my heart which He alone ought to possess. Oh that I had grace to manifest this feeling in every word and action. Though I ardently desire to increase in love to all who bear my Saviour's image; yet I wish to love them only in Him, and for His dear sake. I find I now welcome painful events in providence, because by the blessing of the Spirit of God they tend to humble me, and put me out of love with sin and with myself, on account of the remains of it in my soul.

'The hell I dread is to be allowed in any

instance wilfully to dishonour my God, to grieve the good Spirit, to crucify afresh the Lord of glory. My God, put Thy fear in my heart, that I may not in the least thing wilfully depart from Thee.

‘O what a week this has been of the visible manifestations of God’s unbounded goodness. We have been brought low, and the Lord has helped us. Owing to the continued and dangerous illness of my dear married daughter; we had to leave this place in great affliction—not knowing that we should see her alive. We have returned in peace and safety, and indulge the pleasing hope that we may see her here, under our immediate care. I praise my God for support and comfort given to each of us in this season of peculiar trial.

‘In listening to a discourse on Galatians ii. 20, I heard that to be crucified with Christ was, not only to hate that sin which occasioned Christ’s death, but to abhor ourselves on account of the remainder of sin in the soul. This state

of mind would also be seen in the way a believer regarded the pleasures, the honours, the riches of the world. To be crucified with Christ is to be so after His example, from a regard to Him, and by grace received from Him.

‘The minister also explained the new life of a believer, as not natural but spiritual, not of human origin, but implanted by the Spirit of God ; a life of universal obedience and submission, a life of holiness, a life of love to God and man, a life in which the soul is united to God, Christ, the church, and an eternal life. Glory be to God that in the exceeding riches of His grace, I could in His sight lay claim to consider myself as having these features of the Christian character — especially would I sympathize in what was stated as to abhorring sin of every kind, and loathing myself on account of it ; and also as to that panting after entire conformity to the image and will of my God.

‘I am not only the property of God, but the special care of His providence and grace. I will

trust, therefore, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation.

‘I have this morning received the mournful intelligence of our dear Catherine’s sudden removal to glory. She was alarmingly ill only for fourteen hours, and the greater part of that time insensible. She lived very near to God, and was very dear to her sister and myself. Her last visit was peculiarly refreshing; we had much sweet intercourse together, and often enjoyed the presence of God in united prayer.

‘This was the day she had fixed upon for returning to spend a few weeks with us; but she has now gone to that Saviour whom she ardently loved, and desired to serve whilst on earth. Oh that God may look down in mercy and grace on her bereaved husband and children, and eminently bless this mournful providence to each of them.

The person referred to in the preceding extract was Mrs. Macewen, the elder daughter of Mrs.

Shirreff. This excellent lady was distinguished by very superior attainments, and was highly esteemed by all who knew her. On her dying bed, she described herself as drawn to her God by cords of love. For some time before her decease her piety and devotedness to God were most evidently growing. Conscious that her life was precarious, and deeply concerned for the spiritual interests of her children, her mind was greatly absorbed in exercises of devotion and fervent intercession. Though her decease was somewhat sudden, her relatives had the most satisfactory evidence that she was meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Her mother, writing in the interval between her death and interment says :—"I am filled with wonder and admiration of the rich grace of God manifested to our family, the greater part of whom are now uniting with those before the throne, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and through the exceeding riches of His grace we hope soon to be admitted to share in their employ-

ments and enjoyments. All our friends here are most kind and attentive, feel very much for our affliction, and try what they can to alleviate it. All this is from God, who is signally supporting and comforting my soul, and making me this day attempt the first notes of my eternal song.

‘I desire to give thanks for the humbling views I am getting of myself. The reason for my gratitude on this account, is that these painful discoveries tend to endear my precious Saviour, I see more clearly my lost state without Him, and also His exact suitableness to my case. I see more, also, of the glorious character and perfections of God, and learn to admire His wisdom, holiness, love and grace, shining so conspicuously not only in the work of redemption, but in all the dealings of His providence to His chosen ones. I feel increasing willingness to put my every concern for time and eternity into his blessed hands.

‘I have been hearing this day of the awful effects of the fall—such as blindness of mind,

want of spiritual discernment—the depravity of the human heart, manifested as directed immediately against God's very being, and in choosing and delighting in the ways of sin. We were told, that those who have been delivered in some measure from native darkness, and were brought into God's marvellous light, ought to be deeply humbled on account of remaining blindness, and to seek increasing light. If we were not humbled under a sense of remaining depravity, and daily coming to Christ for deliverance from it, we might be assured we know nothing of the work of the Spirit in our souls, for when He comes, He comes to convince of sin. I was comforted by this, for I can truly say I am more brutish than any. I did cry to the Lord Jesus to open my blind eyes, and I felt much self-abasement when the actings of inward depravity, were described. I want more realizing views of the greatness and holiness of God.

‘I had great enjoyment yesterday in listening to a discourse on the second appearance of Christ,

which was described as glorious, in the manifestation of His deity—of His glorified humanity—in His revelation in His exalted state—glorious also in the event of His delivering up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and in His high commission as judge of quick and dead. It will be glorious in the concomitants that will attend the final judgment ; the trumpet voice, the great white throne, myriads of angels attending the judge, glory redounding to the judge and Saviour from the saints, and glory in the power with which He will punish His enemies, and finally glorious in the event of His possession of the eternal inheritance with His redeemed. I humbly pray that the divine Spirit may bring back these truths with new light, life, and power to my soul and enable me to live under their influence day by day.

October 3rd 1846. We are plunged into deep distress on account of the unexpected death of the Lord's dear honoured servant, Rev. Peter Macbride, who for a number of years has proved

a true and most affectionate friend to us. It was God who made our now glorified friend such a signal blessing and comfort to us. We desire in faith and hope to look forward to our happy reunion in heaven. We would give thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the blessing attending ordinances and privileges past; and oh my Father God, may the death of Thy honoured servant be blessed, for promoting Thy cause and glory in this place, and do Thou provide for his dear people a pastor after Thine own heart, filled with the knowledge of Thy will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and who shall teach them to walk in all Thy commandments and ordinances blameless.'

Mrs. Shirreff was not the only mourner on occasion of the decease of this man of God, equally distinguished by his edifying and most instructive ministry of God's truth, and his ardent zeal for the conversion of souls. Few ministers of the gospel have ever, in an equal degree, commended themselves to every man's

conscience, or left such a blessed testimony to the efficacy of divine grace, and of the love of Christ. Mr. Macbride was a burning and a shining light, and his memory is still cherished with deep affection, not only in his own beloved church, but by all who were in any way associated with him in his works of faith and labours of love.

‘All my prayers,’ writes Mrs. Shirreff, ‘seem to centre in this, a heart to love God, and grace to manifest that supreme love in the way he requires. Sin is my greatest burden, my daily grief, my perfect abhorrence. How precious to me the name of Jesus, so called, because He shall save His people from their sins. I desire to give thanks to my God, that I have been favoured with the friendship of so many of God’s dear children, and that I have the benefit of their prayers.

‘This is the anniversary of my birth, and with deep humility and self-abhorrence for my ungrateful returns to the God of all grace I now record that I have lived sixty-four years in His world,

but alas ! to little purpose, notwithstanding all the pains and culture expended upon me by the great Husbandman. I have been exalted to heaven in regard to privileges, but deserve to be cast down to hell on account of my abuse of them. I desire this day to fly to Immanuel, the appointed refuge, the safe covert, and who is to my soul the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. I would take hold of Christ's strength, for I have none of my own.

‘ I enjoyed much liberty this morning in family prayer, but did not enjoy so much in the public exercises of the sanctuary. I had to deplore a dead, wandering heart. This was partly occasioned by my own unwatchfulness, and I desire to confess my sin with bitterness of soul, Lord Jesus, this evening let thy healing hand be applied. I deserve no such interposition, for I have often willingly fallen into the net spread for me ; but am I not thine by gift, and purchase, and conquest, and art thou not mine by choice ? Let not sin and Satan win the day, but arise,

thou Sun of Righteousness, on my soul with healing under thy wings.

‘I do inwardly dread lest I should lose that secret and intimate communion with God which has formerly sweetened all my comforts and unstinged all my trials. I stay myself on the unchangeable nature and purposes of God; and the unalterable tenor of the new and everlasting covenant. I cry, God be propitious to me, the sinner! I have been obliged to remain in bed a great part of this holy day owing to a threatened return of illness. I felt very lifeless, much vexed with a carnal, wandering heart, scarcely able to utter a few sentences in prayer. The principal comfort I have this day received has been derived from the thirteenth Psalm, which I often repeated with some delight, but on the whole I have been greatly deserted. Unbelief has been very strong, and every grace in a languishing state. I have been waiting on God that He would show me wherefore He thus contendeth with me. I may say with David, “innumerable evils compass me

about, mine iniquities have taken such hold upon me, I cannot look up. They are more in number than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me." But the particular sin that has, I fear, made me lose the enjoyment of this holy day is unwatchfulness and the want of due preparation for its exercises. I did not, as I ought to have done, entreat most earnestly for God's presence and blessing on His ministers and people. Oh! why have I so little love to God and immortal souls? Why am I so lukewarm as to the cause of Jesus and the glory of my God.

'I would seize this opportunity of solemnly committing to my faithful God the charge of His own dear cause in the world, and in this place especially, that He would bless the attempt made to promote the knowledge of His will and obedience to it. Thou, O God, who knowest all things, knowest that in thy fear and with a single eye to thy glory, we have begun this feeble attempt. Do thou show whether it is of Thee, either by

giving it all the success which shall be most for thy glory and the general interests of religion in this place, or by blasting the attempt if it has not thy sanction, and will not ultimately promote thy cause and thy glory. I pray, Father, glorify thy own name, and comfort us with the pleasing prospect of thy approval before assembled worlds. Oh ! send by the hand of whom thou wilt send. Arise in thy own good time, and plead the cause which is thy own.'

Mrs. Shirreff, enjoying as she did for many years, the faithful ministry of Mr. Macbride, and cherishing feelings of cordial affection to Him and other Christian ministers and pious persons belonging to the Presbyterian congregations in Rothesay, had long cherished a desire to dwell amongst her own people, and to meet with them in a place of worship, where those views of the Church of Christ and of the ordinance of baptism which she so conscientiously espoused, might be proclaimed and practically exemplified. She did not, however, wish that such a place of worship

should be less distinguished by the faithful preaching of Christ's Gospel, and of the whole counsel of God.

For some time her only resource was prayer, that God would open up her way and direct her to the fittest means of accomplishing this object. At length a place of worship situated at Ardbeg, for some time in the hands of the Congregational denomination, being on sale, she determined to purchase it, and with the advice and co-operation of Christian brethren, to establish and maintain the ministry of the Gospel by preachers of the Baptist denomination. In the month of November 1847 the late excellent Dr. Innes of Edinburgh conducted the opening services, and in this house of prayer Mrs. Shirreff continued to worship the Father of spirits, until called to the higher and better sanctuary, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The following extract from a letter written by Mrs. Shirreff, will explain her views and intentions as to the chapel at Ardbeg:—"Ardbeg

chapel, formerly occupied by the Independents, has been opened by the Baptists with a view to make known Christ's will as to purity of communion and believers' baptism, and if God shall be pleased to grant His blessing, in due time to form a church wherein Christ's ordinances may be observed in the manner enjoined in His Word. We have regular preaching twice every Lord's day, and once a month in the evening. The congregation is on the increase, and we are favoured with tokens of the Lord's presence. We as yet know of no recent conversions, but we are praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that dead souls may be made to live. Mr. Sanderson,* who has been visiting Rothesay, has kindly taken great interest in the promotion of God's cause in this place. By the blessing of God on his faithful and interesting preaching, not a little interest has been excited, and we hope in the end much good may ensue. We have engaged for some months a pious and talented young minister to

* Richard Burdon Sanderson, Esq.

preach to us until we see what God will do. As yet we are not ready for the formation of a church."

After adverting to some discouraging aspects of affairs in Ardbeg chapel, that excellent minister of Christ, Mr. James Haldane, writes to Mrs. Shirreff:—"I never had the smallest doubt that the part you took in the matter was a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to the Lord, but this does not necessarily imply that the plan shall succeed, but we will wait on the Lord and see what is His most holy will. The Lord will arise and have mercy on Sion. The time to favour her will come, and the period during which, as in the day of Elijah, there was neither dew nor rain will be forgotten amidst the plentiful rain with which the Lord will refresh His weary heritage. Meantime the prayers put up for prosperity are noted in the book of the Lord's remembrance, and they will return into the bosom of those by whom they are presented."

Mrs. Shirreff writes: "I have been deeply

humbled in reading a treatise on the duty of Christians to consecrate every talent to the glory of God. The painful recollection has come over me how little I have done for God. The doom of the unprofitable and wicked servant might justly be mine ; I was greatly affected by the question, 'How much owest thou to thy Lord?' There never was one so deeply in debt to God's grace, and yet how ungrateful my returns to God !

'I desire to bless God for what I have this day enjoyed of His gracious presence. May the Holy Spirit follow the declarations of truth with His blessing. I was much overcome in the morning service, while recollecting the way in which my God had led me through the wilderness. It is now nearly fifty years since He enabled me to receive the Lord Jesus as His gift to me. Alas ! with what grievous departures from my God have I been chargeable since that blessed time ; but my gracious Saviour has in the exceeding riches of His grace often restored my soul, and caused me to walk in paths of righteousness for His own

name's sake. I remain to this day a miracle of mercy. The outward forms of His providence have assumed various aspects, but *all all* have been fraught with rich grace, unchangeable love and faithfulness. One of my sweetest exercises in this distant land has been, under frowning providences to kiss the rod in my loving Father's hand, and to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

'We are in very perplexing circumstances. Satan with his agents seems to be let loose to give, if permitted, a deadly blow to the cause of truth in this place, but, though the blow is aimed, Jesus lives to save—I will trust and not be afraid. My God and Father, graciously direct us with regard to the path of duty, guide us in every thing by thine eye.

'I have not, of late, been feelingly alive to the great end of living to God's glory, I have grievously sinned, in that I have not as often as I ought to have done, sought after communion with God in secret by prayer, and by reading His

blessed word with meditation. I have too much indulged unholy tempers especially as to those who have been permitted to injure me.

‘Oh my God, bless thy young servant who ministers to us, give him much of that anointing which teacheth all things. Be with his spirit while meditating on thy word.’

Rev. James Haldane writes to Mrs. Shirreff, in reply to a letter from the latter as to the state of religious matters in Rothesay :—

“ I feel much pleasure in observing the beautiful harmony of Christ’s doctrine and ordinances. The latter embody the former, and when observed in their simplicity are much calculated to prevent our erring from the truth. I am very partial (to the idea) of the illustration of truth being the description, and the ordinances the pictures by which it is impressed on the memory. Christ’s ordinances present to our eyes what the gospel addresses to our ears. They are the maps by which the form and relative situation of the doctrines of Christ are set before us. The gospel

was first corrupted by changing the ordinances, borrowing from Jewish and heathen practices one piece of will worship after another, till the man of sin appeared, claiming a right to exalt himself above all that is called God or is worshipped.

“In the course of the good providence of God you were led to fix on a field for your exertions which was not very promising, but I trust that by perseverance and prayer, you shall yet bring home your sheaves with gladness. I saw at the first, that the only thing which gave me hope of success was your prayers, and I still have confidence that they have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and that He will exceed all our expectations, although it may not be exactly in the way we expect.

“I have in much weakness endeavoured to hold up your hands. We seem to have got the altar and the wood, but we must agonize for the fire to come down to consume our sacrifice.”

Mrs. Shirreff writes :—

“I desire to commit to the Lord Jesus, as king

and head of His church, the whole charge of His dear cause in this place. He descended to purchase gifts for His church, and is now exalted to bestow them. May He, in rich grace, give us all we need. By whom shall Jacob arise for he is small? Is it not by the mighty God of Jacob? My God, appear in thy glory and build up thy Zion in this place. Give the word Thyself. I have been comforted with these words—‘my groaning is not hid from Thee.’

“I desire to be deeply humbled on account of the low state of religion in my own soul and in the place where I dwell. Oh, that God would pour out his Spirit in rich effusion, that our wilderness may become like Eden, our desert like the garden of the Lord. Revive thy work in the midst of the years. May those who have hitherto been merely in profession, Thy people, become really thine; and may such as have been made spiritually alive be led, through grace, to speak and act as such, that others may take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. My

God, deny not the humble petition of thy sinful, most unworthy handmaid."

Mrs. Shirreff's constant solicitude as to the church in Ardbeg was shared by many of her esteemed friends, and by none more cordially than by R. Burdon Sanderson, Esq., who writes :

"I am extremely sorry that Mr. — has not accepted your offer for Ardbeg, and made experiment at least of what could be done there. But, doubtless, it is otherwise appointed, and the Lord will appear for you when you cease to take thought for yourselves.

"I remember Mr. Romaine says somewhere, in reference to a minister, 'Trust Him (that is the Lord Jesus), and He will send you a person, and from some quarter that you never perhaps heard of before.' He has promised to judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants when He seeth that their strength is all gone, and none shut up or left. May you be enabled to leave all things to His righteous management, and then all will be right. We were meditating yesterday

evening on the kingdom of God, the Holy Ghost which is *within* us, and consists in righteousness, peace, and joy. May that kingdom be realized in you, my dear madam, and in yours, in all its plenitude and power.

“ We grieve to hear of your continued pain, but all things are for the elect’s sake, and I sometimes think that we have the benefit of your sufferings for His body’s sake which is the church. I value the prayers of the infirm far beyond those of the healthy and strong, though I should wish to despise none that are offered up in the name of Jesus. He is the altar which sanctifieth the gift, and our prayers are worthless without His intercession ; but so perfumed, they go up with acceptance to the throne of grace, and shall in due time command even showers of blessing. Nay, let me add, that they have commanded them already.

“ This is truly a testing time. Our Captain, Christ Jesus, and His great adversary Satan, are now at open defiance, and have unfurled the

banners on both sides. The banner which I was enabled to raise ten years ago was that of believers' baptism, and it is under this banner, it seems, that the battle is still to be fought. May the Lord uphold the young converts who have come forward in His name. It was a saying of Whitfield's, not unseasonable, perhaps, at this time, to those engaged in the work of the Lord, 'I find a death must come upon all we do, that the life of it may appear to be wholly of God.' To this agree the words of our Lord Himself. 'Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and *die*, it abideth alone,' (or as one grain) 'but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' For though this is to be understood of Christ personal in the first place, yet it is not less true of His cause and people. That cause many times goes backward before it goes forward, in the same way as the grain strikes root downward, before it brings forth fruit upward. Nevertheless we shall reap if we faint not, and reap the more abundantly for waiting.

"In the meantime it may not be amiss to con-

sider with ourselves, sometimes, why the Lord delays His mercies, and I believe that one reason is, that our hearts may be enlarged. 'Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed and enlarge my coast,' prayed one of old, and the Lord granted him that which he requested. He enlarged both his coast and his heart, and kept him from evil at the same time, that it might not grieve him. He did not suffer him to do anything contrary to his will, but in acting according to it he gave him great enlargement of heart.

'I have been led into these meditations by the narrowness I have found in my own heart, and by the enlargement which, I trust, God himself has given me towards all His people; not only those which are of the law of Baptism, but those who walk according to the footsteps of our father Abraham.'

From another esteemed brother in Christ, Mr. Shearer, Pastor of a Baptist Church in Glasgow, Mrs. Shirreff received counsel and sympathy. He writes, "Be of good cheer, and go on endeavour-

ing to raise up the cause of God. I pray that the Lord may guide you to some one well adapted to feed and increase the flock among you. Eternity alone is worth living for, and therefore it should be our great concern to get good, and do good to others, in view of that eternity. The Lord will not forget what we do, or even *attempt* to do for His Holy name. The reward is great, and the time of toil and suffering is short.

“Our times are in the Lord’s hands, and He will graciously order all our way, until we reach the land where the inhabitants shall no more complain of pain or sickness, and, what is infinitely better, where their hearts shall not be cold to the blessed one who redeemed them. It is very good for us to be tried and afflicted here, that we may be drawn the more to our everlasting friend, who is to be our portion for time and eternity. Blessed be His name, that He will not let us alone till we come to learn fully that He is *our all*.

This pious and devoted servant of the Lord Jesus has entered into rest ; a blessed one who

died in the Lord, and whose memory is still fragrant in many hearts. He who has the keys of death, has also received to Himself the spirit of His waiting servant, Richard Burdon Sander-son, who never ceased to feel and express his cordial sympathy with the cause of Christ at Ardbeg. He, with the subject of this memorial, is now doubtless at home with his Lord.

Another congenial spirit to that of Mrs. Shirreff was that of Mr. John R—— of Glasgow, who writes her at this period :—

“I can sympathize with you in the views of your own vileness which you entertain, for I see so much deadness, and feel such a burden of guilt, such a want of faith and love, such languor in the duties of religion, that the prayer of the publican ought to be mine, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” But where in such circumstances can we look, or to whom shall we go ? how comfortable is that word. “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that hope in His mercy.” Despair is no fruit of the Spirit of God, on the contrary, God

has done much and promised much to banish despair, and to excite trust, hope, and even confidence. God with Christ gives us all things, even far more than we are able to ask, or even to think. Besides, He has given us many exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we may be partakers of the *divine* nature. Wonderful words ! The God of love designs believers in Christ to be like Himself, and they will, by and by, be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. I rejoice to read in your's that Christ is daily more and more precious to you, and so He ought to be, and so He infinitely deserves to be ; but He will be more precious still when you arrive at heaven. The Lamb is said to be the light of that heavenly city. He leads to fountains of living waters, and God Himself with His own hands, as it were, wipes off all tears from their eyes." Then, indeed, our Lord's words will be verified, "Your joy shall be full." Is it not good to think much of that better country, of the better employments, of the better enjoyments, and of the better society

of that heavenly world ? You will have heard of Mr. James Deakin's death. He was rejoicing in the prospect of soon meeting with his wife, and Andrew Fuller, and others, but soon he checked himself, lest he was thinking more of the creature than of the great Creator, who is above all, and in all. Yes, none but Christ, will a real Christian say here, and none but Christ will he say throughout eternity.

“ Be assured heaven will be sweeter to you for all the trials you have been called to endure here. Even now you are in one sense a happy woman, because the Lord has honoured you to be the mother of children whom He has been pleased to make heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. Oh how sweet ought the thought of heaven to be to you, for there you will meet with many dear friends around the throne who will welcome your arrival in that scene, and above all, the worthy Lamb that was slain. There you will be informed of the gracious designs He had in thus afflicting you, and you will cry out with joy,

‘He hath done all things well’ Then will your present sorrows be turned into joy. God deals variously as to the degree of comfort realized in affliction. Miss W——through the greater part of her illness had very gloomy apprehensions concerning herself, but towards the close of life, a pleasing dawn of hope gladdened her soul.

“Oh, what need have we to take a fast hold of Christ as the resurrection and the life, for then He will keep us in the hour of temptation. What a blessed change a believing soul experiences on first entering heaven. Methinks the shout of joy will be inexpressible and full of glory. The full and immediate sight of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the intimacy of communion with Him, and with the other persons in the Godhead, as also with the redeemed company, will be quite ravishing.”

Mrs. Shirreff’s heart was fully engaged in seeking the prosperity of the cause of God.

‘This morning,’ she says, ‘I confessed and mourned over my own sins and the sins of my

fellow-worshippers, in losing sight in a great measure of the one end of living, the glory of God, and in our not being filled with such ardent love to perishing souls, as would lead to diligence in the use of all appointed means, and of every talent with which we are entrusted. While thus engaged, I got such a view of the character of God as revealed in the gospel, as a long-suffering God, bearing with our grievous departures, that I was constrained to give thanks for another opportunity of asking the extension of His rich grace, not only in pardon, but in the *seal* of my pardon, manifest in a growing conformity to His will and image in all things. My God, for Jesus' sake, direct Thy ministering servant to those messages which, in rich grace, Thou wilt own for the conversion of sinners, and for the signal profit of Thy own children. Be pleased thyself to give the word, and follow the declaration of the truth with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I have been seeking my God in bitterness of soul on account of the dishonour brought on His

dear name by the unholy conduct of some of my fellow-worshippers, and on account of my own sin, in not being more deeply affected on this account, and not using means for their recovery, and dealing faithfully with their souls. I have been attempting to cast over on my faithful God the whole charge of His own dear cause and glory, in our feeble attempts to promote them in this place. I look by faith to my exalted Saviour, who descended to purchase gifts for His church, and is now ascended to bestow them, to provide that instrumentality which He will own for the formation and establishment of a church in which the ordinances will be administered according to the rule appointed in the word. I have been desirous of spreading the various cases of our fellow-worshippers and our dear friends in Jesus before the throne. I give thanks for what has been done. Continue, O Lord, and increase Thy goodness.

‘As we are in perplexing circumstances as to the selection of a suitable pastor, I intend keeping to-morrow as far as my bodily strength will

permit for fasting and prayer, that I may have the privilege of spreading our case as individuals and as a society of fellow-worshippers before our God and Father, and to entreat that He will give us a pastor after His own heart.

‘This day brings to my remembrance the faithfulness of my covenant-keeping Jehovah. It is now *twenty* years since my much-loved husband took his flight to glory, and I am again loudly called to spend the day in praises and thanksgiving to my God, and with my whole soul to declare that not one good has failed of all he has spoken—*all, all* has come to pass.

‘I would this day call to remembrance God’s distinguishing goodness in providence and grace to me and mine. I would give thanks for my godly kind parents, for their instructions, prayers, and holy example, for my dear brother with whom I took sweet counsel, for my dear husband and the peculiar blessing of God which attended our happy union, for my dear and most affectionate children, and especially that in the exceeding

riches of His grace we have the pleasing prospect of meeting an unbroken family in heaven.

‘I am called especially to give thanks for the great goodness of God to His sinful handmaid during these twenty years of widowhood.

‘A little before my dear husband’s death, when I saw him fast sinking, I was enabled in a most solemn manner yet cheerfully to give him up and to take my own precious Lord Jesus for my husband, and trust His grace and care for everything necessary for myself and my dear fatherless children, and now at the close of another year I am bound to testify that my Jesus has been better to me than ten husbands.

‘I would give thanks for God’s goodness in regard of the feeble attempt to promote the knowledge of the Saviour’s revealed will in this place, for all that we have seen and still see of God’s hand in this movement, and in the name of Jesus I ask that we may see greater things than these, and would again, as often before, commit the whole matter into His own hand, only asking

that He would secure the glory of His own name. The Lord has done great things for us as a church. Oh ! that we could praise His holy name. Some souls have been brought by various means under deep impressions of the truth. The Lord has given tokens of His presence with, and His blessing on, the administration of the ordinance of baptism. Some are coming forward to declare their love to their ascended Saviour by obeying His commands. Though still in great pain night and day, I desire solemnly to invite the presence of the triune Jehovah in all the services of this day, and especially with those who are this evening to witness a good profession before many witnesses. Lord, enable them to do this in faith and love to thee ; give grace that they may so walk in every relation and under every providence, that others may take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.

June 1, 1857. Through the abundant goodness and tender-mercy of God I am again so far recovered as to be able to sit up for a few

hours in my chair. I have found it beneficial to my soul to keep a record of the Lord's dealings with me, both as tending to increase abasement of soul on account of my wicked, ungrateful returns to so good a God, so precious a Saviour, so condescending a Spirit. I have found it also a blessed means of stirring me up to closer walking with my God, and hence I gladly seize the first opportunity given for beginning again this sweet exercise.'

Mrs. Shirreff continued to record her varied experiences during the three subsequent years of her life, but she was only able to do this during certain intervals from severe bodily indisposition. Her diary from this time bears the traces of a hand feeble, of eyes dim, but not less of a heart panting after God, the living God. The last entry was made in the last year of her life. 'In age and feebleness extreme,' she writes, 'Lord Jesus, I am thine, oh ! come and take thy blood-bought property ; I give myself to Thee. Disappoint Satan in all his plans, magnify Thy matchless grace and bring me redemption. Amen and amen.'

LAST AFFLICTION AND DECEASE.

The reader will be prepared to hear that the subject of this memoir experienced sad symptoms of failing health as she approached the usual term of human life. Though sustained by the invisible power of divine grace, and calmly acquiescent in the midst of her repeated bereavements, and desirous of glorifying God in the pressure of family trials, that pressure was indeed heavy, and bore directly on the most acute sensibilities of her nature. It may be remarked that she kept her body in subjection, and was wont to regard its welfare as a trivial matter when compared with spiritual gain. Her friends were convinced that she sometimes lost sight of the just claims of the earthly house of her tabernacle. The affairs and interests of the inner spiritual life, and of Christ's church, had in her view such absorbing interest that her personal comfort and ease were cheerfully, and perhaps sometimes too

lavishly, sacrificed in their favour. She loved her body chiefly as it was the servant of Christ, and engaged for Him and in His cause. To say that His cause lay near her heart would not explain the real state of things—it was *in* her heart. She mourned and rejoiced, she hoped and feared, she prayed and laboured, she lived for that cause ; and of all her sorrows, none came with such overpowering weight of anguish as those which respected the church of God.

Her health began visibly to decline during the year 1854. After suffering most acutely from an abscess under the arm, she endured a succession of neuralgic pains, so severe, that for some time she was unable to walk. This disorder was so far subdued, that in the year 1856 sanguine hopes were entertained that she would again be able to resume her usual sphere of active service, but these hopes were suddenly blighted by an attack of paralysis, which left her quite prostrate, and for some time incapable of recognizing her dearest relatives. It pleased God to restore her con-

sciousness of surrounding objects ; her strength was also partially recruited, when erysipelas, accompanied with fever, induced again great debility and suffering, but the result of this last seizure was the removal of that dulness and comparative stupor of mind which the previous paralytic seizure had occasioned.

From this time, her mental powers being unclouded, she was again able to enjoy Christian converse, and to attend to her usual engagements in the closet. On two occasions she had the satisfaction of joining her Christian brethren in public worship, and of hearing the truth dispensed by Mr. Mansfield, the esteemed pastor of the church in whose affairs she had taken so deep an interest. It may be most truly said, that in her long illness, when consciousness existed, she never spent one Sabbath during which she was not in spirit with the church in Ardbeg. She continued in prayer, prayed without ceasing, wrestled in supplication, and often singly and separately, for individuals known to her and

meeting with the assemblies of the church. For some who, she had reason to fear, were still unbelievers, she pleaded as in an agony. Thus did she watch, and give her Lord no rest for Sion's sake. These inwrought prayers, offered during that protracted scene of suffering, have gone up for a memorial before her God. May it not be said that she, as well as many other great sufferers, passed through these trials and bodily sufferings, that their prayers, like their precious faith, might become more pure, more perfectly in harmony with the divine will, and, as such, eminently successful. Our great poet says of angels, "They also serve who stand and wait," and certainly they serve God who suffer according to His will and pray.

A friend or an occasional visitor greeted with her affectionate 'smile, and observing her calm cheerfulness, could form no adequate impression of the pain that she constantly endured. Sometimes, indeed, she groaned being burdened, was completely exhausted and fainted away, but her

confidence in her God was aye unshaken. Rising above every emotion was the desire that her heavenly Father would *enable her* to glorify Him, and that He would *glorify His own name* however she might suffer, and whatever might be the course of His providence as to the continuance of her suffering.

In the early days of September 1860, Mrs. Shirreff, now unable to walk, and depending on the care and loving attentions of her daughter and of her faithful servant, was regularly conveyed into the dining-room. She still engaged in family worship, and, when the weather admitted, would sit for some time in sight of the beautiful bay of Rothesay.

Hearing, in the morning of September 5th, of the very sudden death of a young lady, when on a visit to friends living in an adjoining residence, she expressed her desire that the painful event might be sanctified, and requested her daughter to visit the bereaved family with expressions of condolence and sympathy.

In family worship it was remarked that her petitions were more concise and less explicit than usual, and in her pleading on behalf of the church at Ardbeg, her one petition was, "Come, dear Lord, come, come."

On being conveyed to her usual position in the dining-room, she requested that some letters recently received, her Bible, and a magazine containing an article on the work of the Holy Spirit, might be placed near her. Mr. Mansfield calling during the morning and enquiring as to her health, she replied with a smile, "I am not well." On his departure, she expressed her desire that proper attention might be given to promote his comfort.

After a slight dinner, which she ate with scarcely any appetite, her daughter proposed that she should be placed in her favourite spot overlooking the bay and its lovely scenes. After remaining there for a little while, she said, "Oh how tired I feel. I would just like to lie down

here." She added, " I have an impression I shall not be here long."

At her request she was taken to her own room, and when in bed was engaged in conversing with some friends from the city of Edinburgh. In answer to their enquiries, she spoke of her pain as severe, but with her usual courtesy expressed her regret that she could not on that account ask them to remain. Then sending her love by them to the brethren connected with the church, she affectionately bade them farewell.

The time of her departure was now come ; for while her affectionate daughter was momentarily absent to obtain some relief for the sufferer, a sudden attack of sickness and fainting came on, and in a very short time the spirit was released, and passed away to the long cherished home of her affections, her Saviour and her God.

The one thing which is most obvious and prominent in the life of this servant of God, is the *trial* of her Christian graces, the *ordeal* by which her principles were tested, her real character de-

veloped. Hers was not a religion of mere profession or feeling, or an orthodoxy of the head, while the heart went after its covetousness. She was not the creature of circumstances, nor was her religious life governed by the fear or the favour of man. Just and upright, kind and considerate of others in her demeanour, breathing habitually, peace on earth, good will to man, her ruling passion, her most cherished pursuit, was to give glory to God and to enjoy Him for ever.

Her dear and attached friend, Richard Burdon Sanderson, now also himself sleeping in Jesus, said of her: "I well remember going into her chamber one morning after a night spent by her in restlessness and pain, and on asking her how she was, receiving the following reply: 'I have not slept, and have suffered excruciating pain in the night, but I told Satan that, let him do his worst, I would praise my God in spite of him.' She then repeated the two following verses of the 104th Psalm with an emphasis peculiarly her own—

I *will* sing to the Lord most high
 As long as I shall live
 And while I being have I will
 To *my* God praises give.

Of Him my meditation shall
 Sweet thoughts to me afford ;
 And as for me, I will rejoice
 In God, my only Lord.

“ If I,” says Mr. Sanderson, “ have any satisfaction in any good work which ever I did, it is in having anointed this Mary to her burial, by contributing in any wise to the comfort of her latter days.”

He adds, “ May the church at Ardbeg long remember the privilege they have had in such a mother in Israel among them, and may they reap the full benefit of her living and dying prayers. It shall be my privilege, so far as I am enabled, to take up the same note of prayer and praise on their behalf.”

An esteemed minister of the gospel, who was for some time in constant intercourse with Mrs.

Shirreff, and knew her intimately and well, says : " I do not think I ever met with such a rare combination of conscientiousness and simple kindness ; and I am sure the recollection of her saintly character and ways must be very dear to all who love Christian goodness. It is an honour of the highest kind to be connected with her. Among the names of those whom I shall ever think of with love and veneration, hers is enrolled.

Her long tried and ever valued friend, Rev. A. Macleod of Glasgow, says : " The exercises of her mind in secret towards God were, I believe, according to His word. In her family she gave all due attention daily to prayer, praise, and the reading of the Scriptures. By these things we live, and in them is the life of our spirits. She loved the people of God, the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. As to those who preach the gospel and are zealous for the name of Christ, she esteemed them all highly for their work's sake. New and strange doctrines did not please her,

neither could she wish God speed to those who brought them. "Another Jesus" whom the apostles did not preach, "another Spirit" that the apostles had not received, "another gospel" that they had not accepted, could not secure her approbation.

As to her efforts in this place (Rothesay) I had much opportunity of knowing that her strong earnest desire and prayer to God was that souls should be saved ; that, moreover, a true church, on the principles of Scripture, a living temple should be reared—a church united in the truth, of one accord, of one mind, and not only at peace with one another, but rejoicing in the union and enlargement of the general assembly and church of the first-born. Such, I know, was her desire and aim, and such desire or zeal, when implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is, in no instance, and under no circumstances, worldly, low, selfish, or sectarian.

"Doctrine with her," says another minister of Christ gone to his reward, "was not a dry creed,

but the truth of God ; and while she durst not tamper with it, nor give any encouragement to those who seemed to do so, she loved that truth and fed upon it daily.

“ Her conversation was spiritual in an eminent degree. She seemed to move in a spiritual atmosphere. When it appeared requisite, she took an interest in the worldly affairs of her friends and brethren, but concern for the souls of the unconverted and for the advancement of the cause of God, was manifestly the ruling desire of her heart. A self-satisfied expression I never heard fall from her lips, but often have I heard her bewail her unworthiness and imperfections in no affected language, but in a manner that clearly revealed the sincerity and humbleness of her heart. As a disciple of Christ she regarded herself as *His*, and no longer *her own*. Her spirit was that of one who took a decided stand on the Lord's side ; it was the great business of her life to do His will and walk humbly with Him.”

The foregoing pages may convey the impres-

sion to some minds that this dear servant of God was somewhat too solicitous as to the maintenance of her views as to Christian baptism and the nature and order of a church of Christ. It is evident that she had earnest and decided convictions, and these convictions were not weakened by the repeated and very painful disappointments and obstacles which she encountered; but she loved all good men, and rejoiced that there were so many precious truths of God's Word which she held in common with other churches. One of her greatest pleasures was to see around her hospitable table, engaged in social and Christian intercourse, the members of the one family named of Christ, and holding the Head, though meeting and moving in different divisions, in the service of their common Lord. Hers was a spirit of true courtesy and kindness. She was in temper a Christian gentlewoman, and while firm and decided in her allegiance to Him who is the one Master, most cordially did she say, "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in

sincerity." Indeed to injure one lamb of the Saviour's flock was alien from every principle she cherished, and from the purpose and aim of her life.

Mrs Shirreff esteemed very highly the great privilege of hearing the Gospel from the lips of Mr. Macbride, and of his successor in charge of the congregation, and had not her strict conscientiousness and her decided impression as to the Lord's command interfered, she would not have sought separate worship and another ministry. A few years before her decease, she committed to the press, under the superintendence of her friend, Mr. James Haldane, the manuscript of lectures on Christian baptism delivered in Glasgow by her husband, and in various ways she esteemed it her duty to be a witness-bearer to truths, which she and Mr. Shirreff had espoused from sincere conviction, and after prayerful investigation of the divine oracles ; but she had too much good sense and Christian wisdom to obtrude her peculiar views on every occasion, or to give

them a prominence and importance beyond their proper place in the kingdom of her Lord. That kingdom she knew to be essentially righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. A Baptist would never have been acceptable to her merely as such if he had not the Spirit of Christ, and did not receive the truth as it is in Jesus. Her life, like these records of her inner experience, breathed and held forth all the essential elements of fervent devotion and practical piety. Of her it may be truly said she feared God above many, feared Him from her youth. She was an eminent Christian, and specially eminent, because specially tried. May the Holy Spirit sanctify and bless this record, in which being dead she yet may speak. She has joined the cloud of witnesses, and the voice from heaven has said, write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do *follow them.*"



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